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LIAR GAME

甲斐谷忍短編集 roots of A

甲斐谷忍

shinobu kaitani presents

LIAR GAME

甲斐谷忍短編集 roots of A

YJ ヤングジャンプ YJC

集英社

LIAR GAME

– roots of A –

甲斐谷忍

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STARTING WITH THE TITLE WORK DEPICTING THE PRODIGIOUS CON MAN OF "LIAR GAME," SHINICHI AKIYAMA, DURING HIS YOUNGER DAYS, THIS VOLUME INCLUDES 6 RICH ONE-SHOTS SUCH AS "THREE PHASE," WHERE AN EXPERT OF THE STRONGEST DIVINATION IN HISTORY, THE THREE PHASE DIVINATION, ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE A STRANGE MYSTERY, AND "NINE DARTS," WHERE A SUPREMELY TALENTED COMPETITOR GAMBLES HIS OWN FUTURE.
THIS VOLUME PROVES THE TRUE GENIUS OF SHINOBU KAITANI, AUTHOR OF LIAR GAME AND ONE OUTS.

LIAR GAME

— roots of A —

COLLECTED SHORT STORIES BY SHINOBU KAITANI

LIAR GAME roots of A 甲斐谷忍短編集

甲斐谷 忍

LIAR GAME❶—❼ 甲斐谷 忍
霊能力者 小田霧響子の推❶ ❷ 甲斐谷 忍
ONE OUTS(全19巻) 甲斐谷 忍

ヤングジャンプ・コミックス好評発売中！

カンバの飼い方❶—⓫ 石川優吾
リアル❶—❼ 井上雄彦
夜王❶—❼ 倉科 遼 井上紀良
カウンタック❶—⓯ 梅澤春人
風が強く吹いている❶ ❷ 三浦しをん 瀬野そら太
犬のジュース屋さん2❶—❷ おおひなたごう
十字架の骨格標本❶—❷ 岡崎 圭
ノノノ❶—❷ 岡本 倫
孔雀王 参❶ ❺ 荻野 真
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いぬぼか❶—❶ 桜木優美
猫狼い❶—❸ 辺 福雄
SINfinity❶ ❷ 佐々木拓丸
TOUGH タフ ❶ ❽ 猿渡哲也
B型H系❶—❺ さんり ようこ
ハチワンダイバー❶ ❼ 柴田ヨクサル
ワタシハペット❶ ❷ 仙道ますみ
スカイハイ❶—❷ 高橋ツトム
スカイハイ・カルマ❶—❷ 高橋ツトム
SIDOOH 士道 ❶—⓯ 高橋ツトム
野獣は眠らず❶ ❸ 高橋秀武
妖怪人間ヘム❶ 高橋秀武
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秀吉でござる!!❶ ❷ たなかかなこ
ヘタコイ❶—❷ 中野純子
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明日能輝❶ 外薗尋也 羽天荒人
カジテツ王子❶—❶ 向後宏和
風の陣❶—❸ 本宮ひろ志
べしゃり暮らし❶ ❻ 春田まさのり
恋愛一夜にて❶ 倉科 遼 森永茉裕
72 The Soul of Bikes❶—❷ 山口かつみ

2008年7月現在（各巻とも以下続刊予定）

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– roots of A –

LIAR GAME

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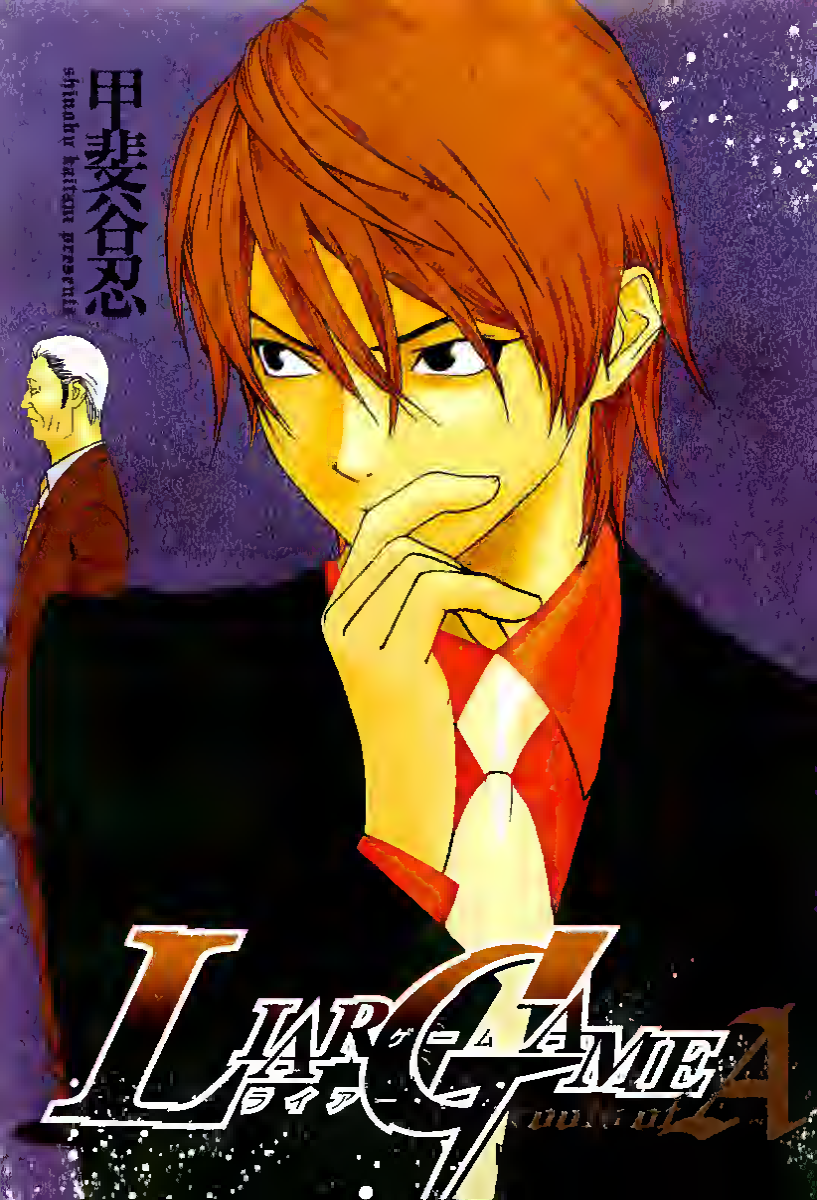
甲斐谷忍
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LIAR GAME
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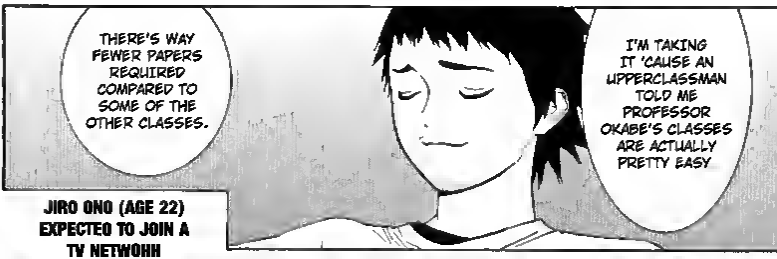
contents

THIS IS A FICTITIOUS WORK.
ANY SEMBLANCE TO PERSONS LIVING OR DEAD IS PURELY COINCIDENTAL.

THE TEITO UNIVERSITY CAMPUS
GOING BACK TO JURE OF 5 YEARS AGO,
WE SEE HERE, SHINICHI AKIYAMA IN HIS YOUNGER DAYS.
roots of A
LIAR GAME
SHIRIGRI AKIYAMA (AGE 22)
TEITO UNIVERSITY 4TH-YEAR
HUMANITIES MAJOR
TEITO UNIVERSITY.. THE MOST SELECTIVE ELITE INSTITUTION IN JAPAN.
IN FACT, OF THE FIVE 4TH-YEAR STUDENTS ENROLLED IN PROFESSOR OKABE'S CRIMINAL PSYCHOLOGY SEMINAR IN THE DEPARTMENT OF BEHAVIORAL STUDIES,
THREE, INCLUDING AKIYAMA, HAVE ALREADY BEEN PROMISED CAREERS IN GOVERNMENT OFFICE AFTER GRADUATING. THE OTHER TWO HAVE ALSO LANDED EMPLOYMENT AT TOP-RATE CORPORATIONS. THEY ARE THE CREAM OF THE CROP.
HEY GUYS,
WHY'D YOU DECIDE TO TAKE PROFESSOR OKABE'S CLASS IN THE FIRST PLACE?

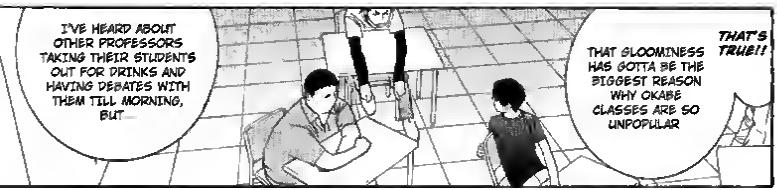
CRIMINAL PSYCHOLOGY JUST PERKED MY INTEREST, I GUESS.
NATSUKI IGARASHI (AGE 21)
EXPECTED TO ENTEH A
GOVERNMENT MINISTRY

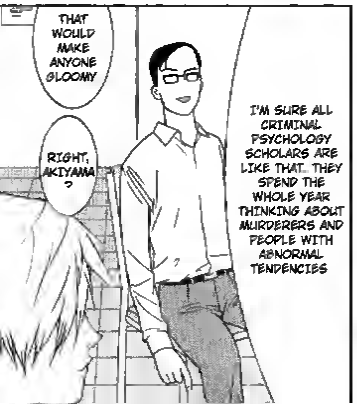
SO I FIGURED I MAY AS WELL PICK SOMETHING INTERESTING.
THE STUFF YOU STUDY IN COLLEGE DOESN'T COUNT FOR SHIT ONCE YOU GO OUT INTO THE REAL WORLD.
SAME HERE.
HITOSHI KOMAKI (AGE 22)
EXPECTED TO JOIN A
BANKING INSTITUTION


THERE'S WAY FEWER PAPERS REQUIRED COMPARED TO SOME OF THE OTHER CLASSES.
I'M TAKING IT 'CAUSE AN UPPERCLASSMAN TOLD ME PROFESSOR OKABE'S CLASSES ARE ACTUALLY PRETTY EASY.
JIRO ONO (AGE 22)
EXPECTED TO JOIN A
TV NETWOHH

THE ONLY PROBLEM IS...
HIS CLASSES ARE GENERALLY PRETTY EASY.
TRUE.
MASAMI MATSUO (AGE 22)
EXPECTED TO ENTER A
GOVERNMENT MINISTRY

HE'S GOT THAT GLOOMY ATMOSPHERE THAT PUTS PEOPLE OFF.


I'VE HEARD ABOUT OTHER PROFESSORS TAKING THEIR STUDENTS OUT FOR DRINKS AND HAVING DEBATES WITH THEM TILL MORNING, BUT—
THAT GLOOMINESS HAS GOTTA BE THE BIGGEST REASON WHY OKABE CLASSES ARE SO UNPOPULAR
THAT'S TRUE!!


THAT WOULD MAKE ANYONE GLOOMY
RIGHT, AKIYAMA?
I'M SURE ALL CRIMINAL PSYCHOLOGY SCHOLARS ARE LIKE THAT. THEY SPEND THE WHOLE YEAR THINKING ABOUT MURDERERS AND PEOPLE WITH ABNORMAL TENDENCIES

HE'S KINDA INDIFFERENT, AND LAID-BACK, AND CREEPY—
PROFESSOR OKABE JUST— ISN'T LIKE THAT AT ALL.

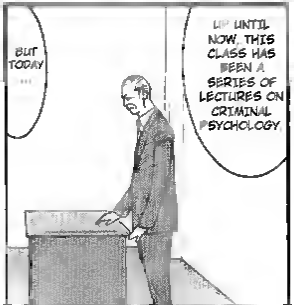
I GUESS SO.
YEAH.
GARUCK
GOOD MORN-ING.
WHAT
GOOD MORN-ING, SIR.
WHOO
SH
YUKIYA OKABE (AGE 62) TEITO UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES DEPARTMENT OF BEHAVIORAL STUDIES PROFESSOR OF SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY SPECIALTY: CRIMINAL PSYCHOLOGY

WHAT

THAT'S WHY EVERYONE THINKS YOU'RE CREEPY
W WHAT'S WITH THE SILENCE...?

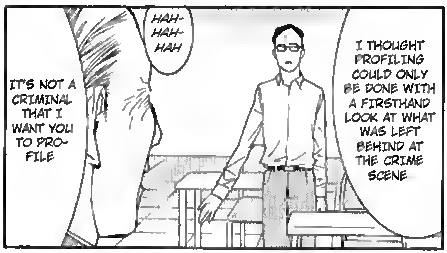
!?
THE ASSIGN-MENT IS

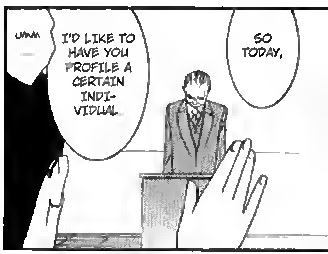
I'M GOING TO GIVE YOU AN ASSIGN-MENT.

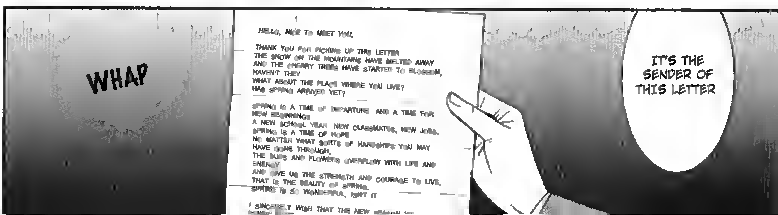

BUT TODAY...
UP UNTIL NOW, THIS CLASS HAS BEEN A SERIES OF LECTURES ON CRIMINAL PSYCHOLOGY.

A PROFIL-ING.

I'VE TAKEN THE TIME TO EXPLAIN THOSE TECHNIQUES DURING THE PAST LECTURES
AS EXPLAINED IN THE LECTURES, PROFILING REFERS TO THE INVESTIGATIVE METHOD OF EVALUATING A CRIMINAL'S CHARACTERISTICS FROM A PSYCHOLOGICAL AND SCIENTIFIC STANDPOINT
!!


HAH-HAH-HAH
IT'S NOT A CRIMINAL THAT I WANT YOU TO PRO-FILE
I THOUGHT PROFILING COULD ONLY BE DONE WITH A FIRSTHAND LOOK AT WHAT WAS LEFT BEHIND AT THE CRIME SCENE


UHMM
I'D LIKE TO HAVE YOU PROFILE A CERTAIN INDI-VIDUAL
SO TODAY,


WHAP
HELLO, NICE TO MEET YOU.
THANK YOU FOR PICKING UP THIS LETTER
THE SNOW ON THE MOUNTAINS HAVE MELTED AWAY AND THE CHERRY TREES HAVE STARTED TO BLOSSOM, HAVEN'T THEY
WHAT ABOUT THE PLACE WHERE YOU LIVE? HAS SPRING ARRIVED YET?
SPRING IS A TIME OF DEPARTURE AND A TIME FOR NEW BEGINNINGS
A NEW SCHOOL YEAR, NEW CLASSMATES, NEW JOBS.
SPRING IS A TIME OF HOPE
NO MATTER WHAT SORTS OF HARDSHIPS YOU MAY HAVE GONE THROUGH,
THE BUDS AND FLOWERS OVERFLOW WITH LIFE AND ENERGY
AND GIVE US THE STRENGTH AND COURAGE TO LIVE.
THAT IS THE BEAUTY OF SPRING.
SPRING IS SO WONDERFUL, ISN'T IT
SINCERELY WISH THAT THE NEW
IT'S THE SENDER OF THIS LETTER

IT'S THE ONE WHERE YOU ATTACH A LETTER TO THE END OF A BALLOON AND RELEASE IT INTO THE AIR, ISN'T IT?
I MADE ONE IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
THAT'S RIGHT
...WHAT IS IT?
WHAT A "BALLOON LETTER" IS?
DO YOU KNOW
MAYBE SO
THE RAIN MUST HAVE SMEARED THE INK WHEN IT GOT CAUGHT ON THE TREE
THE ADDRESS AND NAME HAVE UNFORTUNATELY BEEN BLOTTED OUT.
HOWEVER,
THIS LETTER WAS FOUND HANGING ON THE TREE OF A CERTAIN HOUSE IN SETAGAYA.
IN 2 WEEKS, YOU'LL BE SUBMITTING A PAPER SUMMARIZING YOUR FINDINGS.
YOU HAVE 2 WEEKS. YOU MAY DELIBERATE AMONGST THE FIVE OF YOU.
I'D LIKE TO HAVE YOU DEDUCE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PERSON WHO SENT THIS LETTER.
THEREFORE,

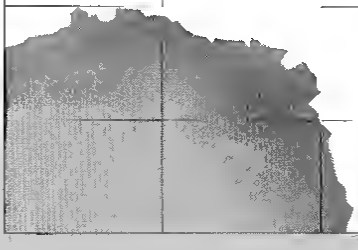
IF I DON'T FIND THE RESULTS TO BE SATISFACTORY, YOU WILL BE ATTENDING EXTRA LECTURES OVER THE SUMMER BREAK.
HOW-EVER,
WELL THEN, I WISH YOU LUCK
HUH!?
WHAT DO YOU MAKE OF THIS LETTER?
ALRI-GHT.
WE'VE JUST GOT TO BUCKLE DOWN AND WORK OUR BRAINS.
NOW NOW,
WHO THE HELL SAID OKABE CLASSES WERE EASY?
MAN,

HELLO, NICE TO MEET YOU

THANK YOU FOR PICKING UP THIS LETTER
THE SNOW ON THE MOUNTAINS HAVE MELTED AWAY, AND THE CHERRY TREES HAVE STARTED TO BLOSSOM, HAVEN'T THEY
WHAT ABOUT THE PLACE WHERE YOU LIVE?
HAS SPRING ARRIVED YET?

SPRING IS A TIME OF DEPARTURE, AND A TIME FOR NEW BEGINNINGS.
A NEW SCHOOL YEAR, NEW CLASSMATES, NEW JOBS.. -
SPRING IS A TIME OF HOPE
NO MATTER WHAT SORTS OF HARDSHIPS YOU MAY HAVE GONE THROUGH,
THE BUDS AND FLOWERS OVERFLOW WITH LIFE AND ENERGY,
AND GIVE US THE STRENGTH AND COURAGE TO LIVE
THAT IS THE BEAUTY OF SPRING
SPRING IS SO WONDERFUL, ISN'T IT

I SINCERELY WISH THAT THE NEW SEASON WILL RENEW YOUR COURAGE AND HOPE
AND IF IT'S NOT TOO MUCH TROUBLE,
PLEASE LET ME KNOW THAT YOU HAVE READ THIS LETTER



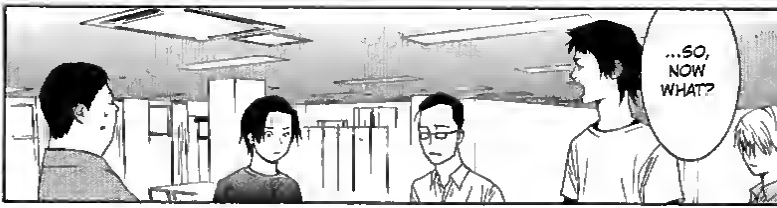
AND HE WROTE IT IN SPRING
YOU'RE JUST REPEATING WHAT YOU READ
THAT'S NOT A PROFILING
HE'S USING THE MASCULINE FORM FOR "US."
FIRST OFF, WE CAN TELL THAT THE PERSON WHO WROTE IT IS MALE.

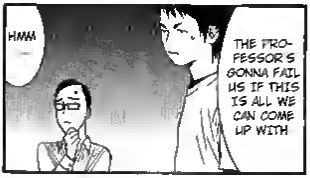
T/N "ROKUTACHI" MASCULINE FORM FOR "US" IN JAPANESE.

OH YEAH.
BUT NO MENTION OF "GRADUATION."
THE LETTER ISTS ALL THE THINGS THAT HAPPEN IN SPRING ...
"SPRING IS A TIME OF DEPARTURE, AND A TIME FOR NEW BEGINNINGS. A NEW SCHOOL YEAR, NEW CLASSMATES, NEW JOBS..."
FROM THE "CHERRY TREES HAVE STARTED TO BLOSSOM," PART?
WHOA, THAT'S PRETTY SPECIFIC
THAT TOO, BUT MAINLY

ON THE OTHER HAND, THE LETTER DOES MENTION THE START OF THE SCHOOL AND WORK YEAR... MEANING THOSE EVENTS ARE YET TO OCCUR
SO GOING FROM THERE...
I SEE.
THEY USUALLY HAVE GRADUATIONS FROM AROUND MARCH 10TH TO MARCH 24TH, DON'T THEY?
SO THIS LETTER WAS MOST LIKELY WRITTEN WHEN "GRADUATION" HAD ALREADY TAKEN PLACE.
THAT'S NOT ALL WE CAN DEDUCE.
YEAH, THEN IT WOULD HAVE TO BE FROM MARCH 24TH TO 31ST!!
WHICH MEANS THIS PERSON THOUGHT OF "SCHOOL YEAR" AND "CLASSMATES" BEFORE "JOBS" WHEN THEY HAD TO LIST SPRING EVENTS.
HAS SPRING ARRIVED YET?
SPRING IS A TIME OF DEPARTURE AND A TIME FOR NEW BEGINNINGS
A NEW SCHOOL YEAR, NEW CLASSMATES, NEW JOBS...
SPRING IS A TIME OF HOPE
NORMALLY, YOU LIST EVENTS IN THE ORDER THAT YOU THINK OF THEM, RIGHT?
THE LETTER LISTS "SCHOOL YEAR, CLASSMATES, AND JOBS" IN THAT ORDER
THEN IT'S UP NORTH
WHAT ABOUT THE "SNOW ON THE MOUNTAINS HAVE MELTED AWAY" PART AT THE BEGINNING? YOU PROBABLY WON'T FIND ANY SNOWCAPPED MOUNTAINS SOUTH OF TOKYO EVEN DURING WINTER
NORTH OF NORTHERN KANTO, MAYBE AROUND THE KOUSHIN'ETSU REGION?
...SO IT'S A STUDENT?
PROBABLY.

SO TO SUMMARIZE, THE SENDER IS A MALE STUDENT LIVING IN THE NORTHERN REGION. HE WROTE THE LETTER SOMETIME IN LATE MARCH...


...SO, NOW WHAT?


HMM
THE PROFESSOR'S GONNA FAIL US IF THIS IS ALL WE CAN COME UP WITH

NOTHING HUH
.....
.....

BUT IF I CAN SAY ONE BASIC THING
YEAH, IT'S NOT BAD

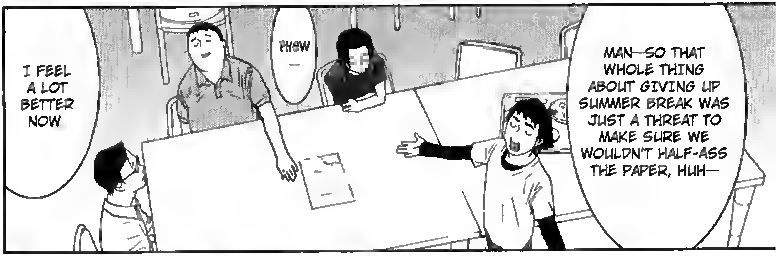
HEY AKIYAMA, YOU HAVEN'T SAID ANYTHING. WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT OUR DEDUCTION SO FAR?

IS THERE A RIGHT ANSWER TO THIS?

THIS LETTER WAS HANGING ON THE TREE OF A CERTAIN HOUSE IN SETAGAYA... RIGHT?
OH YEAH GOOD POINT
HUH?

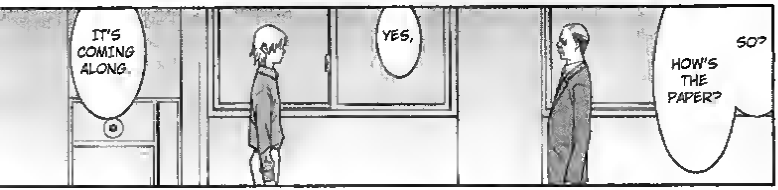
THAT'S TOTALLY POSSIBLE!!
Y-YEAH!!
HE PICKED IT UP, SAW HOW THE NAME AND ADDRESS WERE ERASED, AND THOUGHT "THIS WOULD BE A PERFECT ASSIGNMENT TO GIVE TO THE STUDENTS."
THE PROFESSOR FOUND IT IN HIS OWN HOUSE?
THE PROFES-SOR ALSO LIVES IN SETAGAYA
SO MAYBE...

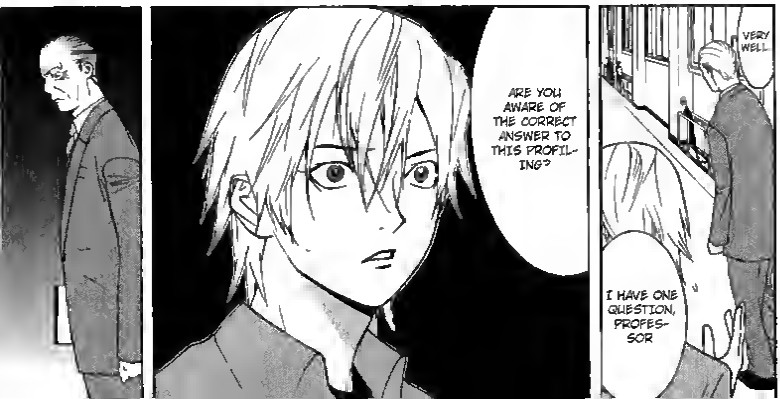
WHICH MEANS HE CAN'T DEMAND BETTER WORK FROM US WHEN WE SUBMIT OUR PAPER!!
...SO THE PROFESSOR DOESN'T KNOW THE RIGHT ANSWER EITHER!!


I FEEL A LOT BETTER NOW
PHEW
MAN—SO THAT WHOLE THING ABOUT GIVING UP SUMMER BREAK WAS JUST A THREAT TO MAKE SURE WE WOULDN'T HALF-ASS THE PAPER, HUH—

HAH-HAH-HAH--HAH
WE'LL BE FINE IF WE JUST MAKE IT SOUND LIKE WE KNOW WHAT WE'RE TALKING ABOUT

OH,
BOW!


IT'S COMING ALONG.
YES,
SO?
HOW'S THE PAPER?


ARE YOU AWARE OF THE CORRECT ANSWER TO THIS PROFILING?
VERY WELL.
I HAVE ONE QUESTION, PROFESSOR

I KNOW EXACTLY WHO THE SENDER IS.
OF COURSE.

BOW
THANK YOU VERY MUCH

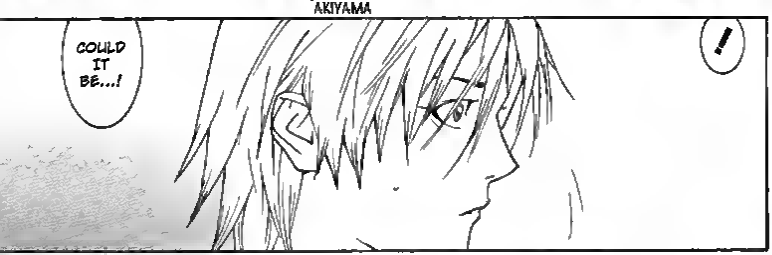
I DON'T KNOW...
HE CAN'T JUST GO, "ACTUALLY, THERE IS NO RIGHT ANSWER," CAN HE?

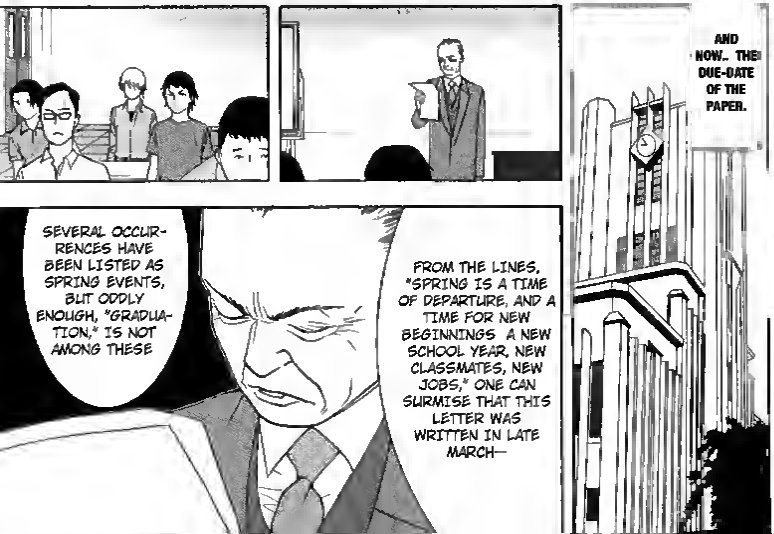
HAH-HAH-HAH, THAT'S GOTTA BE A BLUFF...
HE KNOWS THE RIGHT ANSWER—?

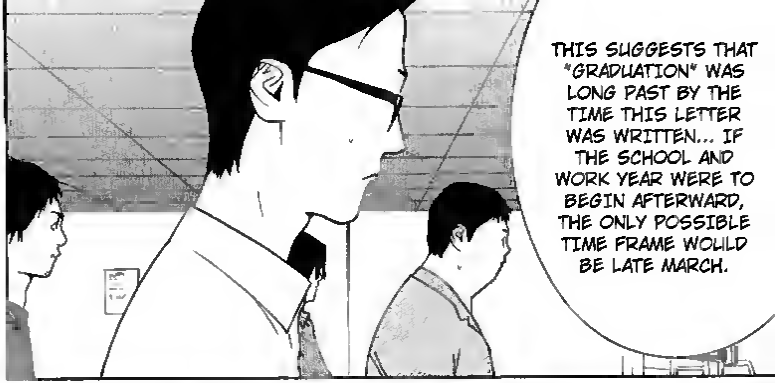
...
ANYWAYS, WE'RE GETTING ALONG WITH THE PROFILING, AKIYAMA. FIRST OFF, WE WROTE THAT THE SENDER IS DILIGENT, NEAT, AND CHEERFUL. THIS IS BECAUSE HIS HANDWRITING IS WELL-ALIGNED AND...

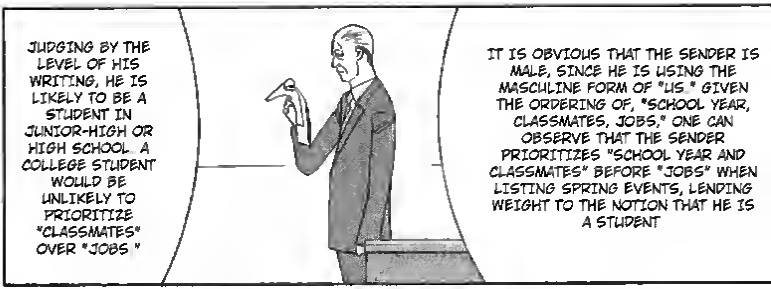
GOSH WHY DO YOU HAVE TO BE SO HONEST? JUST KEEP IT.
I HAVE TO REPORT IT TO THE POLICE
I FOUND A 100 YEN COIN.
WAIT,
NAO— LET'S GO.

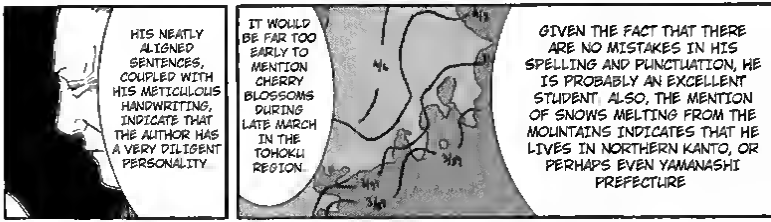
AKIYAMA

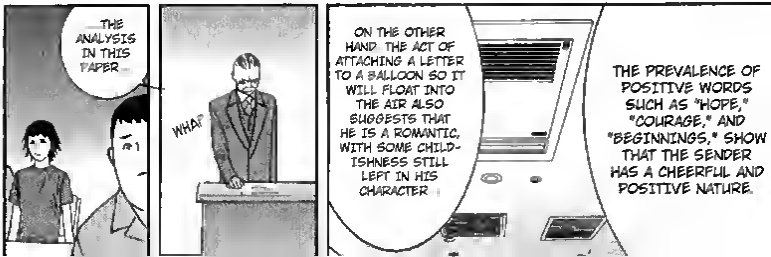

COULD IT BE...!
!


AND NOW.. THE DUE-DATE OF THE PAPER.
SEVERAL OCCURRENCES HAVE BEEN LISTED AS SPRING EVENTS, BUT ODDLY ENOUGH, "GRADUATION," IS NOT AMONG THESE
FROM THE LINES, "SPRING IS A TIME OF DEPARTURE, AND A TIME FOR NEW BEGINNINGS A NEW SCHOOL YEAR, NEW CLASSMATES, NEW JOBS," ONE CAN SURMISE THAT THIS LETTER WAS WRITTEN IN LATE MARCH—

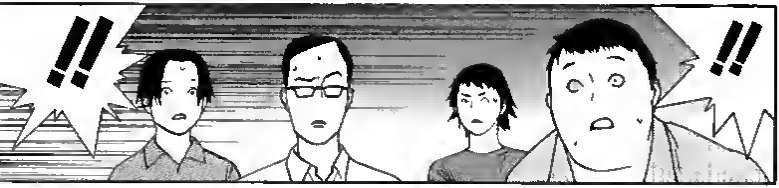

THIS SUGGESTS THAT "GRADUATION" WAS LONG PAST BY THE TIME THIS LETTER WAS WRITTEN... IF THE SCHOOL AND WORK YEAR WERE TO BEGIN AFTERWARD, THE ONLY POSSIBLE TIME FRAME WOULD BE LATE MARCH.


JUDGING BY THE LEVEL OF HIS WRITING, HE IS LIKELY TO BE A STUDENT IN JUNIOR-HIGH OR HIGH SCHOOL. A COLLEGE STUDENT WOULD BE UNLIKELY TO PRIORITIZE "CLASSMATES" OVER "JOBS."
IT IS OBVIOUS THAT THE SENDER IS MALE, SINCE HE IS USING THE MASCULINE FORM OF "US." GIVEN THE ORDERING OF, "SCHOOL YEAR, CLASSMATES, JOBS," ONE CAN OBSERVE THAT THE SENDER PRIORITIZES "SCHOOL YEAR AND CLASSMATES" BEFORE "JOBS" WHEN LISTING SPRING EVENTS, LENDING WEIGHT TO THE NOTION THAT HE IS A STUDENT


HIS NEATLY ALIGNED SENTENCES, COUPLED WITH HIS METICULOUS HANDWRITING, INDICATE THAT THE AUTHOR HAS A VERY DILIGENT PERSONALITY.
IT WOULD BE FAR TOO EARLY TO MENTION CHERRY BLOSSOMS DURING LATE MARCH IN THE TOHOKU REGION.
GIVEN THE FACT THAT THERE ARE NO MISTAKES IN HIS SPELLING AND PUNCTUATION, HE IS PROBABLY AN EXCELLENT STUDENT. ALSO, THE MENTION OF SNOWS MELTING FROM THE MOUNTAINS INDICATES THAT HE LIVES IN NORTHERN KANTO, OR PERHAPS EVEN YAMANASHI PREFECTURE


...THE ANALYSIS IN THIS PAPER...
WHAT
ON THE OTHER HAND, THE ACT OF ATTACHING A LETTER TO A BALLOON SO IT WILL FLOAT INTO THE AIR ALSO SUGGESTS THAT HE IS A ROMANTIC, WITH SOME CHILDISHNESS STILL LEFT IN HIS CHARACTER.
THE PREVALENCE OF POSITIVE WORDS SUCH AS "HOPE," "COURAGE," AND "BEGINNINGS," SHOW THAT THE SENDER HAS A CHEERFUL AND POSITIVE NATURE.

IS COMPLETELY INCORRECT.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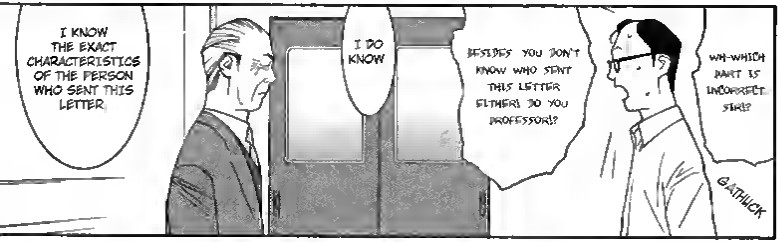
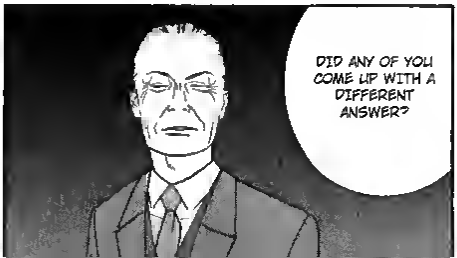
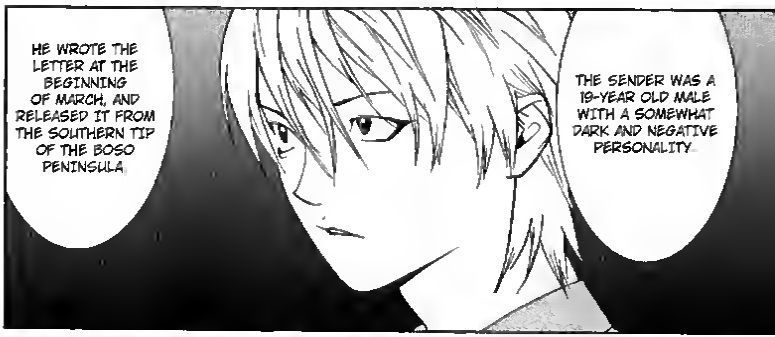

I KNOW THE EXACT CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PERSON WHO SENT THIS LETTER.
I DO KNOW
BESIDES YOU DON'T KNOW WHO SENT THIS LETTER EITHER! DO YOU PROFESSOR!?
WH-WHICH PART IS INCORRECT, SIR!?
GATHICK


DID ANY OF YOU COME UP WITH A DIFFERENT ANSWER?

!!
WHUP

SIR
GAT
HUCK
.....

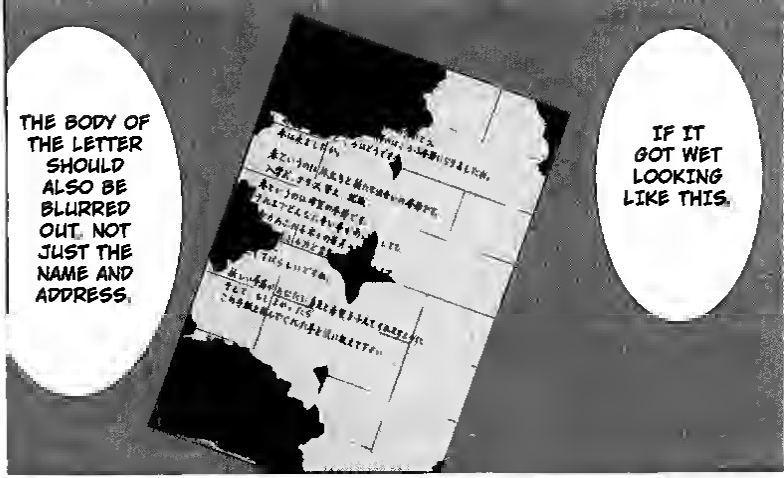
VERY WELL, MR AKIYAMA


HE WROTE THE LETTER AT THE BEGINNING OF MARCH, AND RELEASED IT FROM THE SOUTHERN TIP OF THE BOSO PENINSULA
THE SENDER WAS A 19-YEAR OLD MALE WITH A SOMEWHAT DARK AND NEGATIVE PERSONALITY

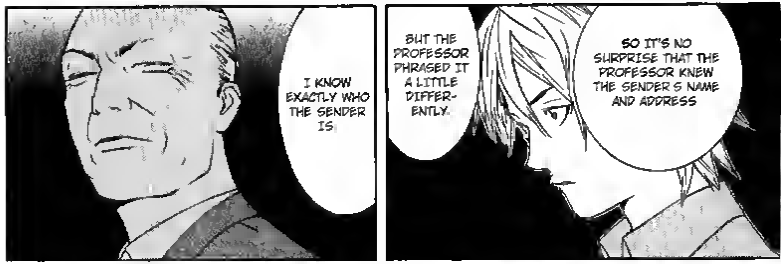
.....
HMM.

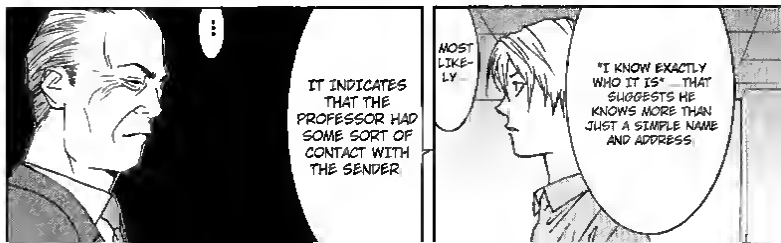
THAT'S TOTALLY IMPOS-SIBLE
WHAT THE HELL?

THAT IS CORRECT.
WHAAAT!?
!?
THE FIRST WAS THE SMEARED INK.
THERE WERE SEVERAL THINGS THAT I THOUGHT WERE ODD WHEN I SAW THIS LETTER
I'LL EXPLAIN.
HOW DID YOU GET THAT!?
WHAT?
AND WHEN YOU FOLD THIS LETTER BY ITS CREASES SEE, IT GOES LIKE THIS, RIGHT?
IT MUST'VE BEEN FOLDED WHEN IT WAS SENT, AND...
I SENT A LETTER USING A BALLOON WHEN I WAS IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, BUT YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO WRAP THE LETTER IN A PLASTIC BAG BEFORE YOU RELEASE IT SO IT WON'T GET WET.
DON'T BE SO SURE.
IT GOT RAINED ON WHEN IT WAS STUCK TO THE TREE, RIGHT?


THE BODY OF THE LETTER SHOULD ALSO BE BLURRED OUT, NOT JUST THE NAME AND ADDRESS.
IF IT GOT WET LOOKING LIKE THIS,

THE WORDS GOT BLURRED AFTER THE LETTER WAS OPENED.
WHICH MEANS,
THAT'S TRUE!!
HEY!!

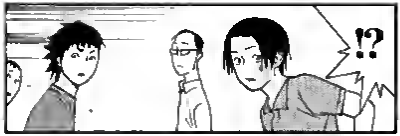

I KNOW EXACTLY WHO THE SENDER IS.
BUT THE PROFESSOR PHRASED IT A LITTLE DIFFERENTLY.
SO IT'S NO SURPRISE THAT THE PROFESSOR KNEW THE SENDER'S NAME AND ADDRESS


...
IT INDICATES THAT THE PROFESSOR HAD SOME SORT OF CONTACT WITH THE SENDER.
MOST LIKELY...
"I KNOW EXACTLY WHO IT IS"... THAT SUGGESTS HE KNOWS MORE THAN JUST A SIMPLE NAME AND ADDRESS.

IF YOU WERE TO WRITE A LETTER TO SOMEONE YOU'VE NEVER MET BEFORE. HOW WOULD YOU WRITE IT?
YOU'D START OFF A GREETING, RIGHT?
AND THEN?
THIS LETTER WAS SENT TO A STRANGER, RIGHT?
AND THAT'S NOT ALL
WOULDN'T YOU INTRODUCE YOURSELF?
IT JUST KEPT BUGGING ME. WHY DIDN'T THE PERSON WHO WROTE THIS LETTER SAY ANYTHING ABOUT HIMSELF?
DID HE NOT WANT TO?
OH,
RI-GHT !!
HELLO NICE TO MEET YOU
THANK YOU FOR YOU LETTER.
THE SNOW ON TH MELTED AWAY.
TREES HAVE B HAVEN'T THEY
HOWEVER THIS LETTER CONTAINS ABSOLUTELY NO INTRODUC-TION
MUST'VE COME AS A RESULT OF WANTING TO SHAKE OFF THE DIFFICULT CONDITIONS THAT SURROUNDED HIM.
IF HE DIDN'T WANT TO, THE POSITIVE EXPRESSIONS LIKE "HOPE" AND "COURAGE..."
.....
MAYBE IT HAS SOMETHING TO DO WITH THE PROFESSOR KNOWING THE SENDER...
IF ALL THIS IS TRUE,

THE AUTHOR OF THIS LETTER.
AND FINALLY I DISCOV-ERED,
IT'S NOT GONNA BE A DEDUC-TION FROM HERE ON OUT.
SOR-RY.
HOW DID YOU DEDUCE THAT!?
!?
...IN SECRET.
I ASKED THE PROFESSOR'S WIFE.
BUT YOUR WIFE TOLD ME EVERY-THING... THE SENDER.
I'M SORRY ABOUT KEEPING THIS SECRET PROFESSOR
I COULDN'T HELP MYSELF
TRUE... BUT,
THAT'S NOT A PROFIL-ING.
HUH!? WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

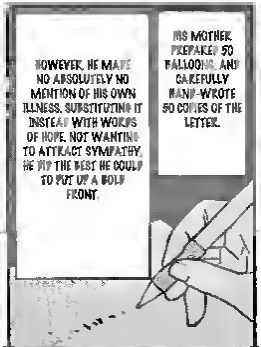
WAS GRAVELY ILL.

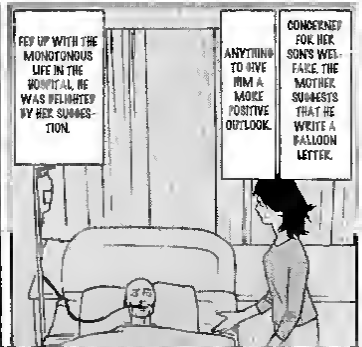

!?

BECAUSE HE REGRETTED NOT BEING ABLE TO SPEND MUCH TIME IN SCHOOL DUE TO HIS ILLNESS
HE LISTED THE WORDS "SCHOOL YEAR" AND "CLASSMATES" BEFORE "JOBS" DESPITE BEING 19 YEARS OLD.

AND BECAUSE OF THAT HE HAD BECOME SILENT AND RECLUSE A STARK CONTRAST FROM HIS ONCE CHEERY PERSONA.
THE PERSON'S NAME WAS KOSHIRO TAKEYA. HE FELL ILL AT AGE 16, AND HAD SPENT THE PAST 3 YEARS ON THE SICKBED

MAYBE HE DIDN'T INCLUDE "GRADUATION" BECAUSE IT CONJURES UP THE FEELING OF "DEPARTURE."

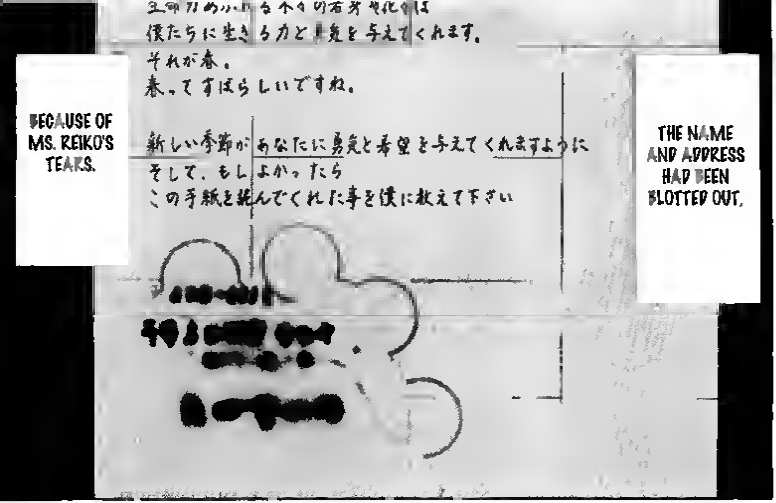

HOWEVER, HE MADE NO ABSOLUTELY NO MENTION OF HIS OWN ILLNESS. SUBSTITUTING IT INSTEAD WITH WORDS OF HOPE. NOT WANTING TO ATTRACT SYMPATHY, HE PUT THE BEST HE COULD TO PUT UP A BOLD FRONT.
HIS MOTHER PREPARED 50 BALLOONS, AND CAREFULLY HAND-WROTE 50 COPIES OF THE LETTER.

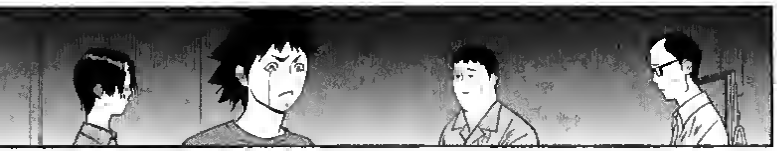

FED UP WITH THE MONOTONOUS LIFE IN THE HOSPITAL, HE WAS DELIGHTED BY HER SUGGESTION.
ANYTHING TO GIVE HIM A MORE POSITIVE OUTLOOK.
CONCERNED FOR HER SON'S WELFARE, THE MOTHER SUGGESTS THAT HE WRITE A BALLOON LETTER.

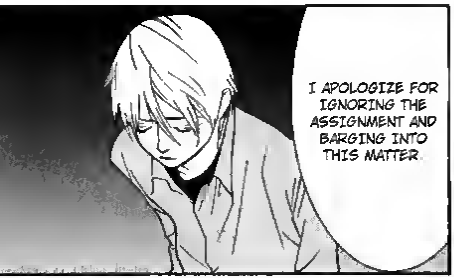
HE HADN'T SEEN THE OUTSIDE SCENERY FOR A LONG TIME BECAUSE HE WAS BEDRIDDEN... HAVING GONE TO CHIBA TO GET A CHANGE OF AIR, HE WASN'T AWARE THAT THERE IS NO SNOW ON THE MOUNTAINS OF THE BOSO PENINSULA.
?
THEN HOW DO YOU EXPLAIN THE "SNOW ON THE MOUNTAINS" PART?
THE SCENERY FROM HIS HOMETOWN IN NIIGATA.
THOSE WERE THE MEMORIES FROM WHEN HE WAS HEALTHY.
AND ONE DAY DURING THE BEGINNING OF MARCH, HIS MOTHER RELEASED 50 BALLOONS OFF THE ROOF OF THE HOSPITAL ON A SOUTHERLY WIND
BALLOON LETTERS DON'T MAKE IT INTO PEOPLE'S HANDS VERY OFTEN.
BUT LUCKILY, ONE BALLOON DID REACH A YOUNG GIRL LIVING IN SETAGAYA.
HER NAME WAS REIKO
PROFESSOR OKABE'S ONLY DAUGHTER, WHO WAS 18 YEARS OLD AT THE TIME
MS. REIKO WAS ALSO LIVING A RECLUSIVE LIFE. ONCE AN AVID BASKETBALL PLAYER, SHE WAS EVEN SELECTED FOR THE NATIONAL TEAM, BUT A GRAVE KNEE INJURY HAD FORCED HER TO GIVE UP THE SPORT.
SINCE THEN, SHE HAD SPENT HER DAYS LOCKED UP IN HER ROOM, NOT KNOWING WHAT SHE WANTED TO DO WITH HER LIFE EVEN WITH HER HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION FAST APPROACHING.
HMM!?

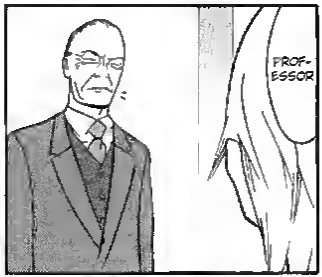
はじめまして
THE OUTLOOK IN THE LETTER GAVE HER STRENGTH AND COURAGE.
SPRING AND HOPE WILL ALWAYS ARRIVE IF ONE BEARS THROUGH THE HARSH WINTER...
THAT LETTER SAVED HER FROM HER CONDITION.
THE FIRST STEP TOWARDS TURNING HER LIFE AROUND SHE WAS REBORN.
THE FOLLOWING DAY SHE FINALLY STEPPED OUTSIDE HER HOUSE TO APPLY FOR A PREPARATORY SCHOOL.
.....
.....
BUT THE RESPONSE WAS QUITE UNEXPECTED
AND BEFORE LONG HER LETTER WAS ANSWERED
THANKING KOSHIRO FOR GIVING HER THE STRENGTH TO CONTINUE LIVING
SHE IMMEDIATELY WROTE A RESPONSE TO THE AUTHOR OF THE LETTER
?
?
THE LETTER HAD BEEN WRITTEN BY KOSHIRO'S MOTHER

KOSHIRO HAD PASSED AWAY,
SHORTLY AFTER RECEIVING MS. REIKO'S LETTER.
!?
HERE'S WHAT THE LETTER SAID
"KOSHIRO WAS HAPPY. THE LETTER HE WROTE HAD GIVEN COURAGE TO SOMEONE ELSE—
THANK YOU, MS. REIKO. KOSHIRO READ YOUR LETTER BEFORE HE LEFT US."
REALIZING FOR THE FIRST TIME THAT KOSHIRO HAD BEEN GRAVELY ILL, MS. REIKO WAS UNABLE TO GRASP THE SITUATION AT FIRST.
BUT WHEN SHE RETURNED TO HER ROOM AND TOOK ANOTHER LOOK AT KOSHIRO'S LETTER,
HER TEARS BEGAN TO OVERFLOW.


BECAUSE OF MS. REIKO'S TEARS.
THE NAME AND ADDRESS HAD BEEN BLOTTED OUT.



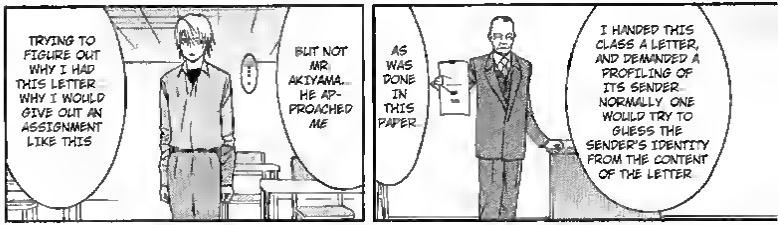

I APOLOGIZE FOR IGNORING THE ASSIGNMENT AND BARGING INTO THIS MATTER.

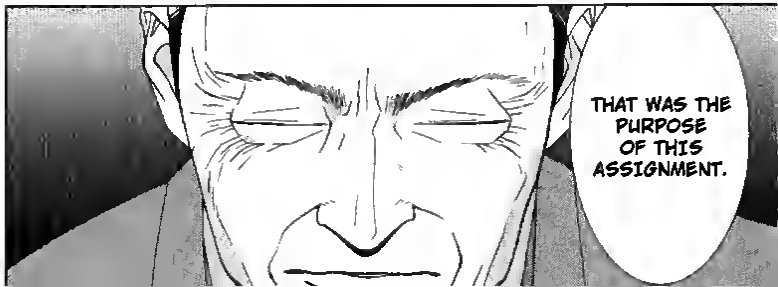

PROF-ESSOR

...IN FACT,
I'M NOT GOING TO REPROACH YOU.

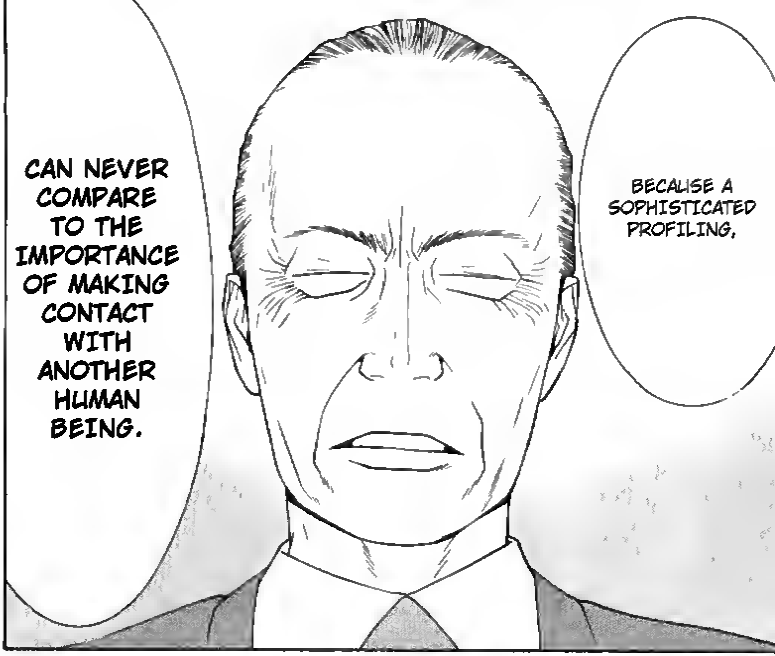
YOU DID THE RIGHT THING.

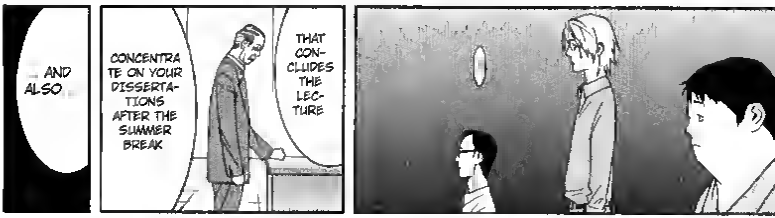
HUH?
!?


TRYING TO FIGURE OUT WHY I HAD THIS LETTER... WHY I WOULD GIVE OUT AN ASSIGNMENT LIKE THIS
BUT NOT MR. AKIYAMA... HE APPROACHED ME
AS WAS DONE IN THIS PAPER.
I HANDED THIS CLASS A LETTER, AND DEMANDED A PROFILING OF ITS SENDER. NORMALLY ONE WOULD TRY TO GUESS THE SENDER'S IDENTITY FROM THE CONTENT OF THE LETTER.


THAT WAS THE PURPOSE OF THIS ASSIGNMENT.

YOU ARE ALL TALENTED.
ONCE YOU GO OUT INTO THE WORLD, YOU WILL STAND ABOVE OTHERS AS THE LEADERS OF SOCIETY.
BUT BECAUSE YOU HAVE SUCH WONDERFUL MINDS,
OVER TIME, YOU MAY FORGET TO CONSIDER OTHER PEOPLE'S FEELINGS
PSYCHOLOGY IS A STUDY THAT PROBES HUMAN FEELINGS.
AND AS STUDENTS IN THE PSYCHOLOGY DEPARTMENT—
I ASK THAT YOU ALWAYS PAUSE TO CONSIDER PEOPLE'S FEELINGS.


BECAUSE A SOPHISTICATED PROFILING,
CAN NEVER COMPARE TO THE IMPORTANCE OF MAKING CONTACT WITH ANOTHER HUMAN BEING.

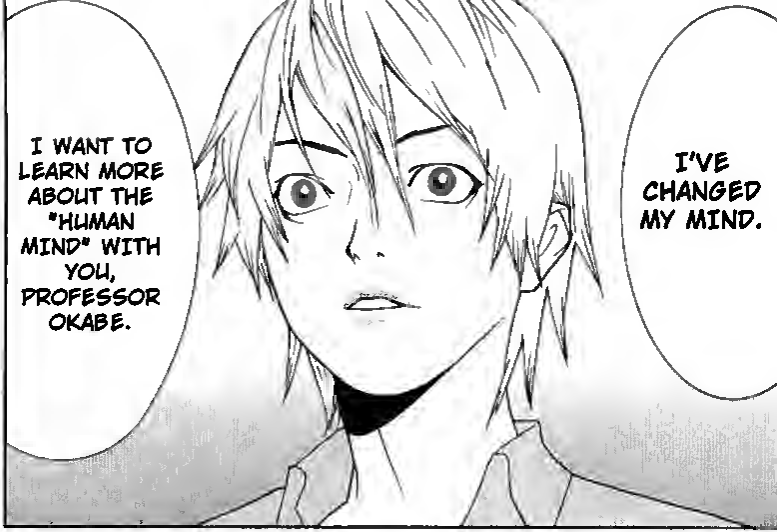

... AND ALSO ...
CONCENTRATE ON YOUR DISSERTATIONS AFTER THE SUMMER BREAK.
THAT CONCLUDES THE LECTURE

ALL OF YOU HAVE PASSED THIS ASSIGNMENT.

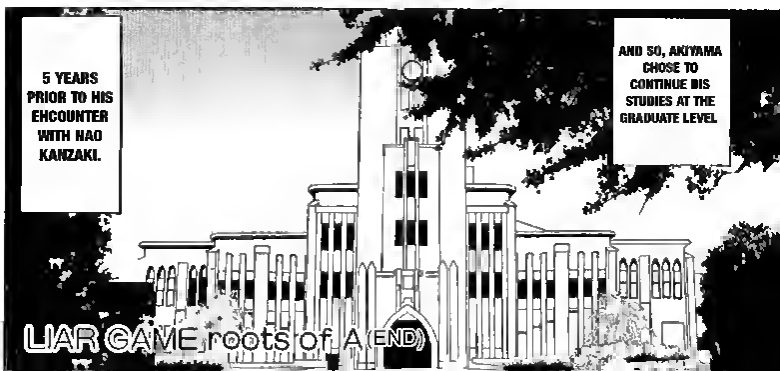
OHHHH
YEAH!

...
I THOUGHT MAN WE WERE SCREWED
HAH HAH

YOU DO BUT HAVEN'T YOU ALREADY RECEIVED A JOB OFFER?
NO
DO I STILL HAVE TIME TO APPLY FOR THE GRADUATE SCHOOL?
WHAT IS IT?
PROF-ESSOR


I WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE "HUMAN MIND" WITH YOU, PROFESSOR OKABE.
I'VE CHANGED MY MIND.

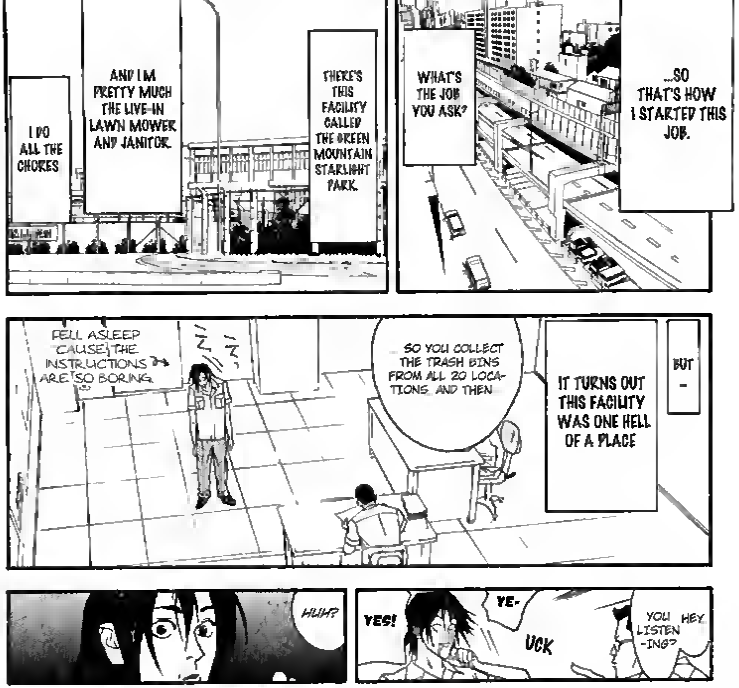
...I SEE.
.....


5 YEARS PRIOR TO HIS ENCOUNTER WITH NAO KANZAKI.
AND SO, AKIYAMA CHOSE TO CONTINUE HIS STUDIES AT THE GRADUATE LEVEL.
LIAR GAME roots of A (END)

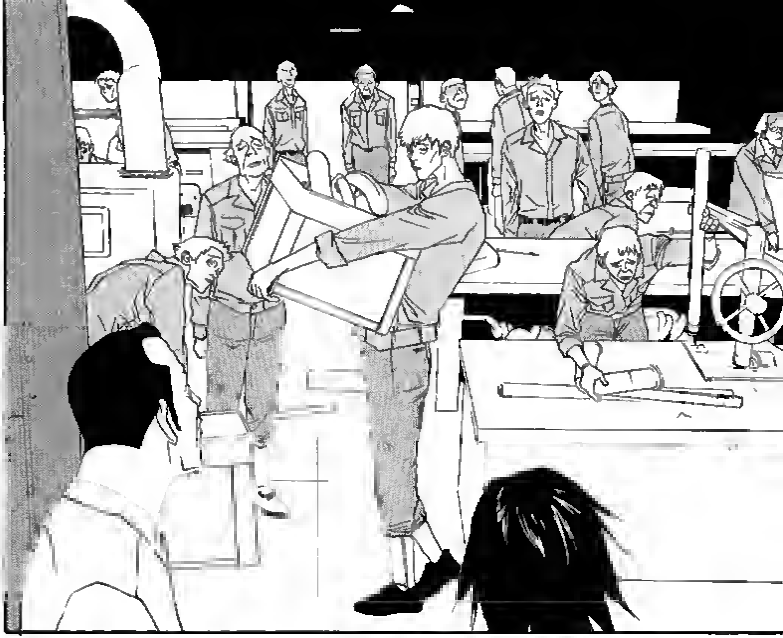
WHY WAS I BORN?
...HAVE YOU EVER THOUGHT ABOUT THAT?
ME? OF COURSE I HAVE
...ACTUALLY, I THINK ABOUT IT ALL THE TIME...
NINE ARTS
JOB CENTER
WHY DOES A GUY WITH NO TALENT LIKE ME EVEN EXIST IN THIS WORLD ?
LIKE, IF THERE IS A GOD WHY WOULD I EVEN BE HERE IN THE FIRST PLACE?
YOU SURE THERE AREN'T ANY JOBS? I REALLY NEED TO PAY MY RENT BY TOMORROW OR ELSE I'M GONNA GET KICKED OUTTA MY APARTMENT
...NOT IN THIS KIND OF ECONOMY
NEVER STAYED IN HIGH SCHOOL FOR LONGER THAN 2 WEEKS
CAN'T HOLD ON TO A JOB FOR MORE THAN 3 DAYS,
BUT YOU STILL FOOL AROUND MORE THAN ANYONE ELSE AN ENDLESS CYCLE OF DRINK, GAMBLE, BUY EVERY SINGLE DAY
AND NOW YOU'RE KNEE DEEP IN DEBT
DO YOU REALLY EXPECT SOMEONE TO HIRE A MAN LIKE THAT?
SH! SHUT UP!
E-EVEN I'VE GOT ...
OHH--- SO YOU ACTUALLY HAVE A TALENT THAT'S WORTH BRAGGING ABOUT?
YEAH
THAT'S RIGHT.
ALRIGHT
WAT-CH
ニヤーン

I'M A TERRIBLE GAMBLER, BUT I WAS ALWAYS PRETTY GOOD AT DARTS!
SEE!! ISN'T THAT AWE-SOME!?
TAP
TAP
TAP
WHO
000
OOOOSH
DID YOU SAY YOU'RE ABOUT TO BE KICKED OUT OF YOUR APARTMENT?
MISTER,
JOB CENT
OH,
I'M HOME!
I'LL COME BACK LATER.
HOW'S THAT SOUND?
BUT THIS ONE COMES WITH HOUSING AND 3 MEALS PER DAY
THE WAGES ARE HORRENDOUSLY LOW,
.....

9
NINE DARTS


I DO ALL THE CHORES
AND I'M PRETTY MUCH THE LIVE-IN LAWN MOWER AND JANITOR.
THERE'S THIS FACILITY CALLED THE GREEN MOUNTAIN STARLIGHT PARK.
WHAT'S THE JOB YOU ASK?
...SO THAT'S HOW I STARTED THIS JOB.
FELL ASLEEP CAUSE THE INSTRUCTIONS ARE SO BORING.
...SO YOU COLLECT THE TRASH BINS FROM ALL 20 LOCATIONS, AND THEN
IT TURNS OUT THIS FACILITY WAS ONE HELL OF A PLACE
BUT -
HUH?
YES!
YE-
UCK
YOU HEY, LISTEN -ING?
!?
!?

SHOW HIM AROUND THE FACILITY.
Green Mountain Starlight Park, Director Shigeo Saikawa
@ATHUCK
HE HAD GREEN EYES AND GREEN HAIR
WHAT WAS UP WITH THAT KID JUST NOW?
WELL, THAT'S ENOUGH EXPLAINING FOR NOW.
GOT IT?
YOU'LL BE CLEANING THEM EVERY SINGLE DAY.
ALRIGHT, THOSE ARE ALL THE PLACES YOU'RE GONNA BE RESPONSIBLE FOR.
YES SIR.
!!
LISTEN UP!
HEY!
WORKSHOP?
YEAH, LEMME INTRODUCE YOU TO THE PATIENTS IN THE WORKSHOP.

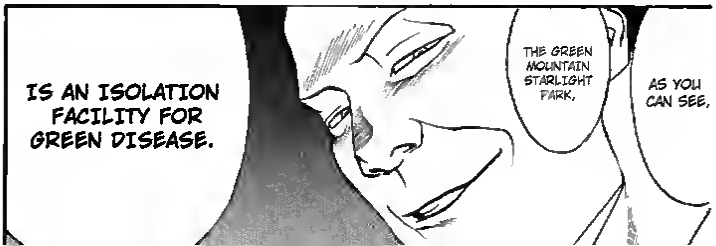


GREEN EYES.
GREEN FACES.

WH WHAT IS THIS?
THIS IS MINORU SHIBARA, HE'S GOING TO BE WORKING HERE FROM TODAY!

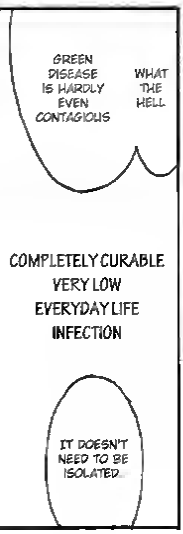
HAH-HAH, IS THAT RIGHT
BESIDES I KINDA CAME HERE NOT KNOWING WHAT THIS PLACE WAS
YES

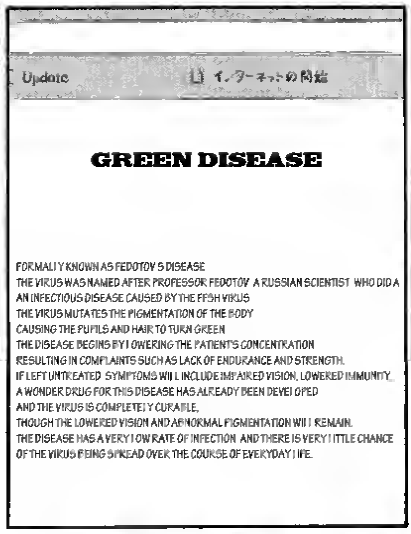
OH WAIT, IS THIS THE FIRST TIME YOU'VE EVER SEEN THEM?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN WHAT? THOSE ARE GREEN DISEASE PATIENTS
WH WHAT'S UP WITH THOSE JEGS HEY?

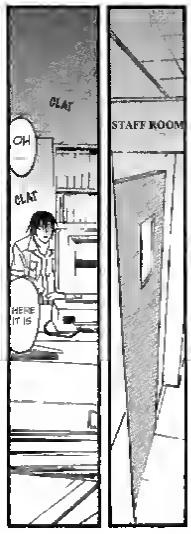

IS AN ISOLATION FACILITY FOR GREEN DISEASE.
THE GREEN MOUNTAIN STARLIGHT PARK,
AS YOU CAN SEE,

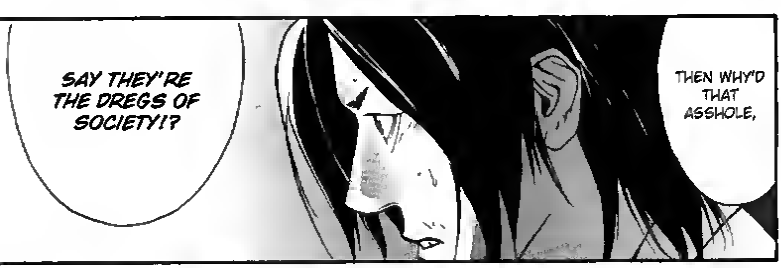
MAKES YOUR BODY WEAKER AND YOUR EYESIGHT WORSE SO IT'S IMPOSSIBLE FOR YOU TO LIVE A NORMAL LIFE.
IT'S AN EPIDEMIC... SOMETHING ABOUT TURNING YOUR EYES AND HAIR GREEN.
GREEN DISEASE ...I'VE HEARD ABOUT IT BEFORE.
BLANK EMPTINESS DESPAIR WHAT IS UP WITH THIS DEFEATED ATMOSPHERE?
BUT, WHAT SHOCKED ME THE MOST WERE THEIR EXPRESSIONS, NOT THE COLOR OF THEIR EYES AND HAIR.
UCK.
WHO'S COMING IN LATE!!
HEY!!
QUIT BEING SO LAZY!
TAP
TAP
TAP
THAT KID FROM BEFORE...
YOU AGAIN!!
I...
I'M SORRY.

CRACK
IT'S ALRIGHT THIS IS HOW YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO HANDLE THEM.
HE WAS JUST A LITTLE LATE!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING!
WHA-
!!
THEY CAN'T FIT IN WITH THE REST OF SOCIETY
GREEN DISEASE PATIENTS ARE WEAK AND THEY SPREAD THEIR SICK GERMS ALL OVER THE PLACE
!!
ALWAYS BE THANKFUL FOR THAT!
THE GOVERNMENT SET UP THIS FACILITY OUT OF PITY
ARE THE DREGS OF SOCIETY.
THESE GUYS,


GREEN DISEASE IS HARDLY EVEN CONTAGIOUS
WHAT THE HELL
COMPLETELY CURABLE
VERY LOW
EVERYDAY LIFE
INFECTION
IT DOESN'T NEED TO BE ISOLATED.


Update
インターネットの掲示板
GREEN DISEASE
FORMALLY KNOWN AS FEDOTOV'S DISEASE
THE VIRUS WAS NAMED AFTER PROFESSOR FEDOTOV A RUSSIAN SCIENTIST WHO DID A
AN INFECTIOUS DISEASE CAUSED BY THE FFSH VIRUS
THE VIRUS MUTATES THE PIGMENTATION OF THE BODY
CAUSING THE PUPILS AND HAIR TO TURN GREEN
THE DISEASE BEGINS BY LOWERING THE PATIENT'S CONCENTRATION
RESULTING IN COMPLAINTS SUCH AS LACK OF ENDURANCE AND STRENGTH.
IF LEFT UNTREATED SYMPTOMS WILL INCLUDE IMPAIRED VISION, LOWERED IMMUNITY
A WONDER DRUG FOR THIS DISEASE HAS ALREADY BEEN DEVELOPED
AND THE VIRUS IS COMPLETELY CURABLE.
THOUGH THE LOWERED VISION AND ABNORMAL PIGMENTATION WILL REMAIN.
THE DISEASE HAS A VERY LOW RATE OF INFECTION AND THERE IS VERY LITTLE CHANCE
OF THE VIRUS BEING SPREAD OVER THE COURSE OF EVERYDAY LIFE.


CLAT
OH
CLAT
HERE IT IS
STAFF ROOM


SAY THEY'RE THE DREGS OF SOCIETY!?
THEN WHY'D THAT ASSHOLE,

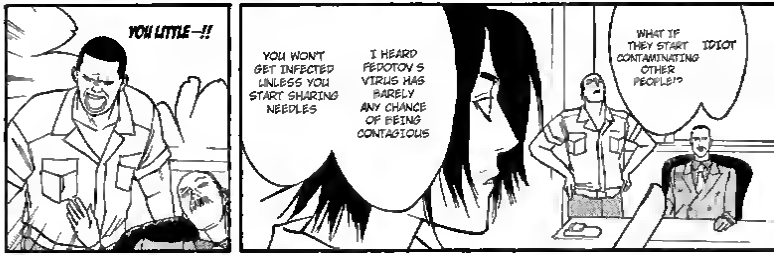
HEY!
CLICK

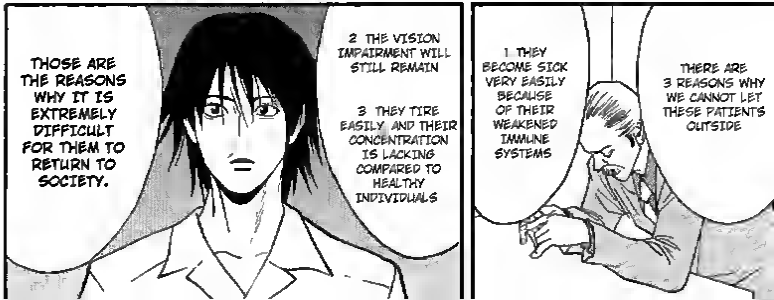
YES SIR.
RETURN TO YOUR ROOM.
WHO GAVE YOU PERMISSION TO USE THIS COMPUTER.
THE PATIENTS HERE WERE REALLY TREATED WORSE THAN PRISONERS
I DON'T KNOW WHETHER THEY DO IT AS DISCIPLINE, OR JUST TO VENT THEIR ANGER, BUT THE EMPLOYEES BEAT THE PATIENTS PRETTY MUCH EVERY SINGLE DAY.
IN FACT
THEY CALL THIS PLACE A TREATMENT FACILITY BUT I'VE NEVER SEEN THEM DOING ANY TREATMENT
GET BACK LAZY--!
AND THE EMPLOYEES WOULD ALWAYS YELL THIS PHRASE
THE SURPRISING THING WAS ALL THIS LABOR WAS BEING DONE IN THE NAME OF REHABILITATION MEANING THE PATIENTS THEMSELVES ARE NOT PAID FOR THEIR WORK.
EITHER WAY THE PATIENTS ARE FORCED TO DO MANUAL LABOR FROM DAYBREAK TO NIGHTFALL FROM WELDING AND DISMANTLING TO ASSEMBLING SOME SORT OF MACHINE.

YOU'RE THE DREGS OF SOCIETY, BUT WE'RE LETTING YOU LIVE OUT OF KINDNESS—!
DON'T GET THE WRONG IDEA—!
WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING OVER THERE—!!
THEY WERE BEING YELLED AT LIKE THIS 24/7
NO WONDER THEY LOOK SO LETHARGIC
UHH!
I-I'M SORRY
I-I'M SORRY
YOU'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO BE TAKING A BREAK!!
THUD
THUD
HE WANTED YOU TO COME OVER IMMEDIATELY...!
I THINK THE DIRECTOR WAS CALLING YOU
UCK...! IT'S HIM AGAIN!

DASH
OH
HEY!
.....
HEH HEH
WHAT AN IDIOT
YOU DO THE REST
"TSK" ALRIGHT
YES SIR!

WHY DON'T YOU JUST LET THEM LEAVE IF THEY'VE RECOVERED ENOUGH ENERGY TO WORK?
I JUST DON'T GET IT.
THAT ONE DAY I WENT AND TALKED TO THE DIRECTOR.
I FELT SO BAD FOR THEM.

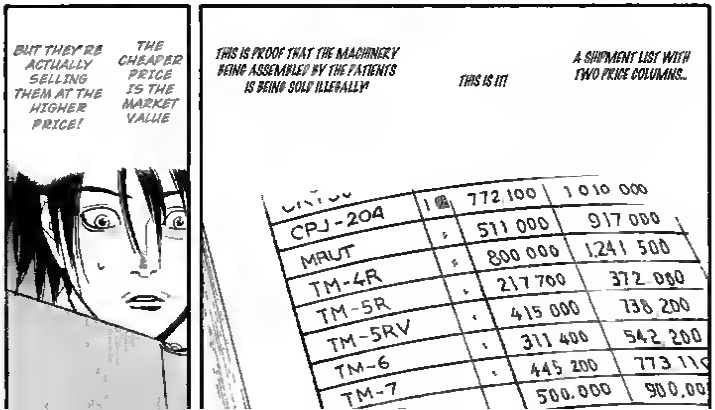

YOU LITTLE—!!
YOU WON'T GET INFECTED UNLESS YOU START SHARING NEEDLES
I HEARD FEDOTOV'S VIRUS HAS BARELY ANY CHANCE OF BEING CONTAGIOUS
WHAT IF THEY START CONTAMINATING OTHER PEOPLE!?
IDIOT


THOSE ARE THE REASONS WHY IT IS EXTREMELY DIFFICULT FOR THEM TO RETURN TO SOCIETY.
2 THE VISION IMPAIRMENT WILL STILL REMAIN
3 THEY TIRE EASILY AND THEIR CONCENTRATION IS LACKING COMPARED TO HEALTHY INDIVIDUALS
1 THEY BECOME SICK VERY EASILY BECAUSE OF THEIR WEAKENED IMMUNE SYSTEMS
THERE ARE 3 REASONS WHY WE CANNOT LET THESE PATIENTS OUTSIDE

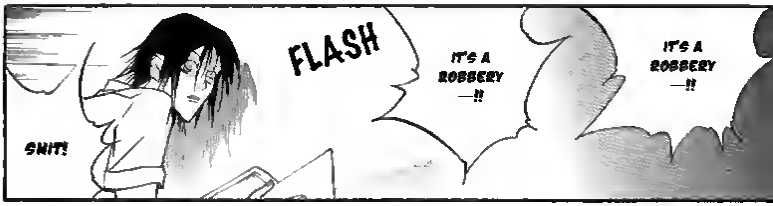
WE ARE KEEPING THEM HERE OUT OF KINDNESS.
SO YOU SEE...

THESE GUYS ARE CRAZY-!
ARCHIVES
NO TRESPASSING
MY ASS YOU ARE !
KIND-NESS?

WHAT THE—!?
!!
SOMETHING UP WITH THIS FACILITY
SOME-THING'S UP


BUT THEY'RE ACTUALLY SELLING THEM AT THE HIGHER PRICE!
THE CHEAPER PRICE IS THE MARKET VALUE
THIS IS PROOF THAT THE MACHINERY BEING ASSEMBLED BY THE PATIENTS IS BEING SOLD ILLEGALLY!
THIS IS IT!
A SHIPMENT LIST WITH TWO PRICE COLUMNS...
CPJ-204 1 772 100 1 010 000
MRUT " 511 000 917 000
TM-4R " 800 000 1 241 500
TM-5R " 217 700 372 000
TM-5RV " 415 000 738 200
TM-6 " 311 400 542 200
TM-7 " 445 200 773 11
500.000 900.00

IF MORE AND MORE PATIENTS LEAVE THE FACILITY NATURALLY THERE'S GONNA BE OUTBREAKS AND MERGERS, AND THE FREE LABOR'S GONNA COME TO AN END
THE NUMBER OF INFECTED PEOPLE HAS PLUNGED BECAUSE OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE WONDER DRUG SO THEY DON'T WANT TO RELEASE A SINGLE PATIENT
THEY GET A HUGE SUBSIDY FROM THE GOVERNMENT AND NO ONE WILL EVER FIND OUT THAT THEY FORCE THE PATIENTS INTO DOING FREE LABOR.
THEY'RE BASICALLY RUNNING A FEYOTOV'S DISEASE ISOLATION FACILITY TO MAKE EASY MONEY
I SEE. SO THIS IS THEIR PLAN!
WHILE THE EMPLOYERS EMBEZZLE THE PROFITS.
I KNEW IT--THE PATIENTS ARE DOING FORCED LABOR UNDER THE PRETENSE OF A REHAB EDUCATION PROGRAM.

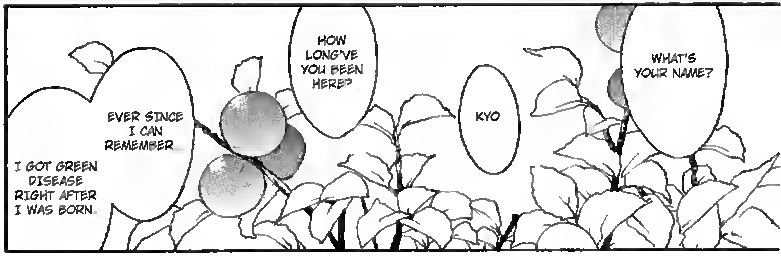

SHIT!
FLASH
IT'S A ROBBERY —!!
IT'S A ROBBERY —!!

WAIT
WE'RE TURNING YOU INTO THE POLICE!
I'M NOT STEALING!
WHAT DID YOU STEAL!?
SO IT WAS YOU!

TO THE GARDEN OF PUNISHMENT FOR A WEEK.
SEND THIS MAN

THE GARDEN OF PUNISHMENT
PRETTY MUCH A PRISON CELL WITH A SKY-BLUE CEILING.
IT'S NOT REALLY A GARDEN. JUST A FREAKISHLY SMALL COURTYARD SURROUNDED BY HUGE WALLS SO THERE'S NO WAY TO ESCAPE.
DAMN IT— I WAS SO CLOSE TO GETTING THE DIRT ON THOSE GUYS!
GROWL!
*STOMMK
BUT MAN I'M HUNGRY
IF ONLY I COULD MUNCH ON THOSE THINGS...
THERE'S SOME APRICOTS UP THERE...
!!
!?
!?
WHAP
PLOP

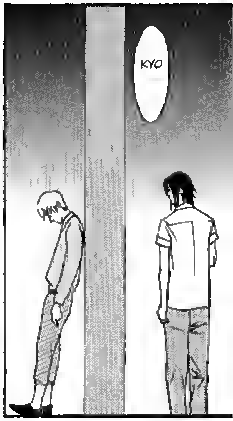
YOU HELPED ME OUT BEFORE, SO...
WAS THAT YOU?
HEY!
YOU'RE...
HEH HEH HEH
.....
...HEH HEH


I GOT GREEN DISEASE RIGHT AFTER I WAS BORN.
EVER SINCE I CAN REMEMBER
HOW LONG'VE YOU BEEN HERE?
KYO
WHAT'S YOUR NAME?

OR A PHONE CALL FROM THEM
.....
I'VE NEVER GOTTEN A SINGLE LETTER
I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT THEY LOOK LIKE
MET THEM?
SO YOU'VE NEVER MET YOUR PARENTS OR ANYTHING?

I ASKED THE DIRECTOR TO LET ME SEE MY PARENTS.
WHEN I WAS LITTLE
I USED TO?
I USED TO WANT TO
YOU WANNA SEE THEM, RIGHT?
THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE.
NO WAY
HAH-HAH
BUT THE DIRECTOR LAUGHED AND SAID THIS.
WHY DO YOU THINK YOUR PARENTS HAVE NEVER TRIED TO CONTACT YOU AFTER PUTTING YOU IN HERE.
YOU DON'T GET IT, DO YOU.
GET IT?
THEY DON'T WANT PEOPLE TO KNOW THAT SOMEONE IN THEIR FAMILY HAS GREEN DISEASE.
YOUR VERY EXISTENCE IS AN ABOMINATION TO THIS WORLD.

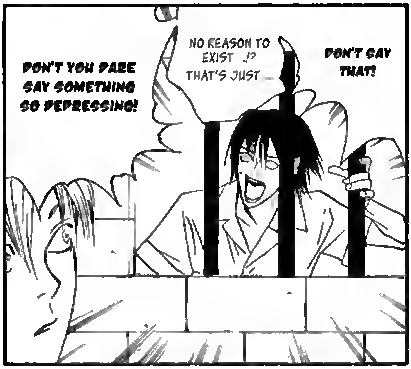
WE'RE NOT HUMAN BEINGS.
IT'S FRUSTRATING, BUT IT'S THE SAD TRUTH

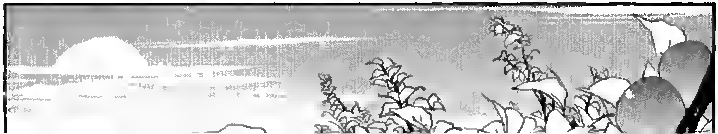

KYO

WE HAVE NO REASON TO EXIST.
THE EMPLOYEES ARE RIGHT
IN FACT, WE SCARE PEOPLE.
WE'RE USELESS
ALL OF THE PATIENTS HERE THINK THIS WAY.

I WONT
EITHER

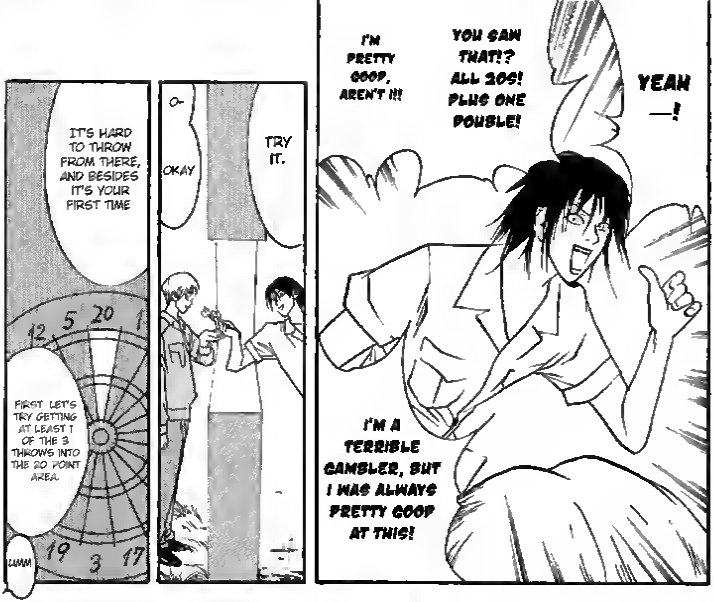
A REASON FOR EXISTING—!?
NO ONE ACTUALLY KNOWS THE ANSWER TO THAT!

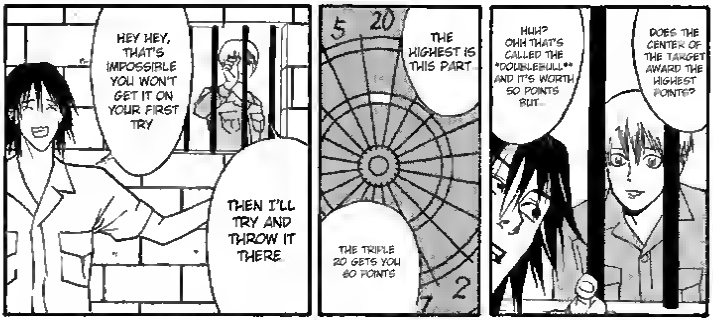

DON'T YOU DARE SAY SOMETHING SO DEPRESSING!
NO REASON TO EXIST ..!? THAT'S JUST...
DON'T SAY THAT!



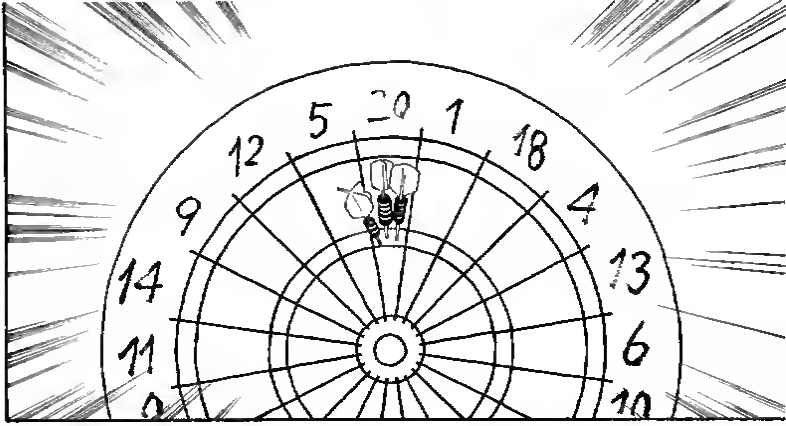
WHAT
I'M GLAD I MET A NICE PERSON LIKE YOU, MR. MINORU.
SWU?
I'M GLAD
BUT,
I WAS PRETTY MUCH LIVED IN THE GARDEN OF PUNISHMENT AT ONE POINT.
I'M SLOW AND WEAK, SO I GOT PUT IN HERE ALL THE TIME.
YEAH.
CRICK
MAN,
YOU'RE REALLY GOOD AT THAT.
WHA?
SO I STARTED GATHERING NUTS AND BERRIES LIKE THIS SO I WOULDN'T STARVE TO DEATH.
WHA?
...AND WHEN YOU'RE IN HERE, YOU GET REALLY HUNGRY, RIGHT?
LET ME TEACH YOU A COOL LITTLE GAME.
OH YEAH.
?
HEH HEH
SO YOU DEVELOPED A SKILL TO SURVIVE, HUH.
THAT'S AMAZING.

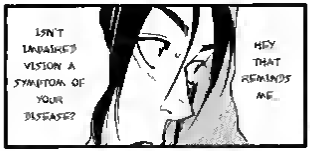
IT'S A DART
WHAT IS THAT?
TADAA—H
THE RULES ARE SIMPLE
YOU'RE AWESOME IF YOU CAN HIT THE PARTS OF THE TARGET WITH THE HIGHEST POINTS
WHIP
LET ME DEMON-STRATE
SEEING IS BELIEV-ING
TAP
TAP
TAP


I'M PRETTY GOOD, AREN'T I!?
YOU SAW THAT!? ALL 20S! PLUS ONE DOUBLE!
YEAH —!
I'M A TERRIBLE GAMBLER, BUT I WAS ALWAYS PRETTY GOOD AT THIS!
TRY IT.
OKAY
IT'S HARD TO THROW FROM THERE, AND BESIDES IT'S YOUR FIRST TIME
FIRST, LET'S TRY GETTING AT LEAST 1 OF THE 3 THROWS INTO THE 20 POINT AREA.
UMM
12 5 20 1 19 3 17


HEY HEY, THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE YOU WON'T GET IT ON YOUR FIRST TRY
THEN I'LL TRY AND THROW IT THERE
THE HIGHEST IS THIS PART
THE TRIPLE 20 GETS YOU 60 POINTS
5 20 7 2
HUH? OHH THAT'S CALLED THE "DOUBLEBULL"* AND IT'S WORTH 50 POINTS BUT...
DOES THE CENTER OF THE TARGET AWARD THE HIGHEST POINTS?

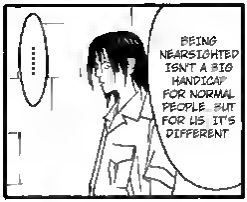
*THE OUTER CIRCLE IS CALLED THE "BULL," AND IS WORTH 25 POINTS, WHILE THE INNER CIRCLE IS "TS DOURLE, WORTH 50 POINTS.


20
1
18
4
13
6
10
12
5
9
14
11

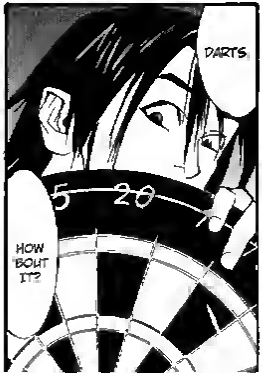

ISN'T UNBALANCED VISION A SYMPTOM OF YOUR DISEASE?
HEY THAT REMINDS ME...

OKAY?
FOR YET ABOUT OKAY
THAT WAS OKAY, WASN'T IT!?
I DID IT!!

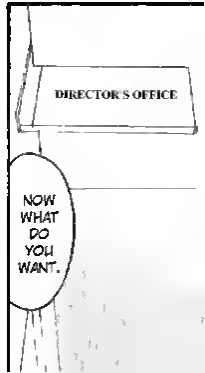
I KNOW!


.....
BEING NEARSIGHTED ISN'T A BIG HANDICAP FOR NORMAL PEOPLE. BUT FOR US IT'S DIFFERENT

BUT IN OUR CASE IT'S CONSIDERED A DEFECT BECAUSE WE HAVE GREEN DISEASE
BUT IT'S REALLY NO DIFFERENT FROM BEING NEARSIGHTED
YES IT IS


DARTS
5
20
1
HOW 'BOUT IT?

IT SEEMS LIKE WE HAD A LITTLE MISUNDERSTANDING
NOW NOW, PLEASE RELAX
SO I THOUGHT WE'D PLAY A LITTLE GAME AND CALL IT A TRUCE.


DIRECTOR'S OFFICE
NOW WHAT DO YOU WANT.

"501"

IS THE STANDARD GAME OF DARTS, PRACTICED BY AMATEURS AND PROFESSIONALS ALIKE, WHERE THE OBJECTIVE IS TO DECREASE YOUR POINTS QUICKER THAN YOUR OPPONENT, STARTING FROM 501. THE CHARACTERISTIC OF THIS SET OF RULES IS THAT THE PLAYERS MUST REDUCE THEIR SCORES TO EXACTLY ZERO BY HITTING A DOUBLE IN THEIR FINAL THROW IN ORDER TO WIN.

IN COMPETITIVE MATCHES, THE PLAYERS TAKE TURNS, MAKING 3 THROWS AT A TIME. BUT IN THIS CASE, EACH PLAYER WILL NOT SWITCH OUT UNTIL THEY FINISH. THE PLAYER WHO TAKES THE LEAST AMOUNT OF THROWS TO FINISH WILL BE THE WINNER.

EVEN VETERANS HAVE A HARD TIME GETTING IT INTO THAT TINY LITTLE SPACE
YEP, TOTALLY
TOOK ME 7 THROWS TO FINISH
PHEW, FINALLY OVER.
YES, THIS GAME IS DIFFICULT BECAUSE YOU NEED TO FINISH BY HITTING A DOUBLE
TAP

THEN
I WOULD LIKE THEM TO TEACH ME HOW TO PLAY THAT WAY.
ADMIRABLE
SO WHAT IF THERE WAS A PERSON WHO COULD HIT THOSE DOUBLE REGIONS LIKE CRAZY!?

WHAT IF THAT PERSON WAS A GREEN DISEASE PATIENT?
I AGREE IF THERE WAS SOMEONE LIKE THAT,
THE REASONS FOR NOT ALLOWING THE PATIENTS OUTSIDE
THE VISION IMPAIRMENT, THE LOWERED ENDURANCE AND CONCENTRATION
THOSE THINGS WOULD NO LONGER APPLY WOULD THEY
IMPO-SSIBLE
!?
EWHUP
PLEASE
PLEASE TAKE A LOOK AT HIS SKILL
IN OTHER WORDS, HE'S CAPABLE OF FITTING IN WITH THE REST OF SOCIETY.
PATIENT NO 13, KYO KISARAGI
IS AN EXPERT AT DARTS
PLE/SE ALLOW HIM TO LEAVE THE FACILITY.
IF NONE OF THE EMPLOYEES /RE ABLE TO DEFEAT HIM,
AND ...
PLAY HIM IN A GAME OF DARTS.

DO YOU REALLY THINK WE'RE GONNA LET THEM GET AWAY WITH WINNING?
BESIDES
IF WE CAN GET THAT NOISY FOOL TO SHUT UP WITH A GAME OF DARTS, THEN IT'S NOT A BAD DEAL
AGREEING TO A REQUEST LIKE THAT...
ARE YOU SURE?
THE TIME HAS COME.
2 MONTHS LATER,
DON'T WORRY, KYO
THERE'S HOW WAY YOU'RE GONNA LOSE IF YOU DO EXACTLY AS WE PRACTICED
20
THINK YOU CAN BEAT ALL OF US?
HEY
HOW MANY OF YOU GUYS ARE GONNA PLAY SOI TODAY?
HOW-EVER

WHOAAAA!! THE FIRST PLAYER ON THE EMPLOYEE TEAM FINISHES IN ONLY 19 SHOTS—!!
TAP
OHHHHH
ANYONE CAN GET BETTER IF YOU GIVE THEM 2 MONTHS TO PRACTICE
THEY COULDN'T EVEN FINISH IN 50 SHOTS JUST A COUPLE MONTHS AGO!
NO WAY!
YOU BETTER NOT LOSE ON THE FIRST ONE—!
KYO—!
OHHHHH

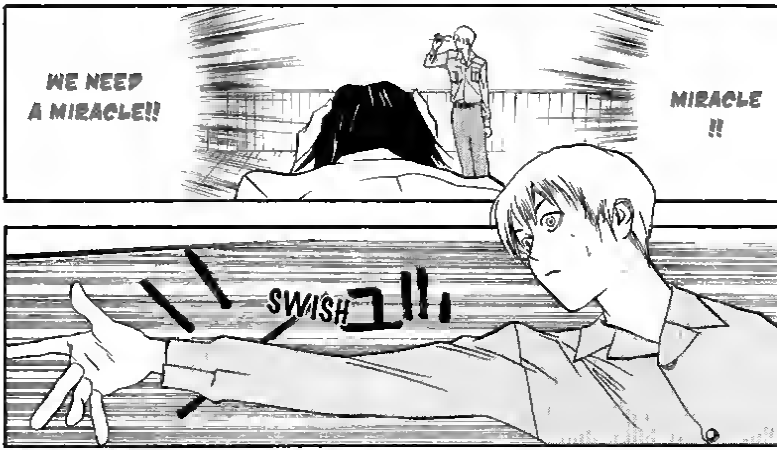
KYO FINISHED IN ONLY 13 SHOTS—!!
オオオ
WHOA-AAA!!
TAP
TAP
BUT KYO WAS SIMPLY FAR TOO GOOD
I WAS SURPRISED THAT THEY HAD IMPROVED SO MUCH
UNTIL FINALLY...
TAP
HE DESTROYED EACH OF HIS OPPONENTS WITH HIS INCREDIBLE CONTROL.
ONE BY ONE

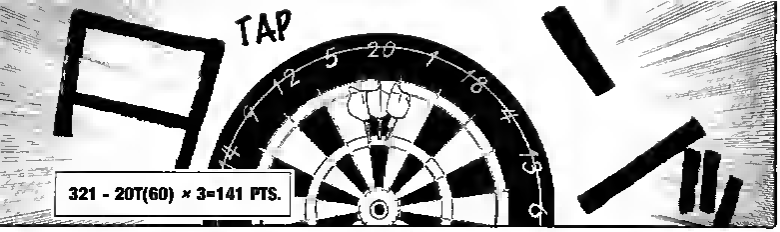
ONE MORE!
ONE MORE!
SO THE LAST ONE UP IS...
THAT'S 19 IN A ROW!!
HE WON—!!
NO
THE DIRECTOR?
.....
MUMBLE
MUMBLE
HE WILL BE THE LAST PLAYER
.....
IT DOESN'T MATTER WHO IT IS. AS LONG AS IT'S AN EMPLOYEE, RIGHT?
I HIRED HIM JUST LAST MONTH
I'VE NEVER SEEN THIS EMPLOYEE BEFORE
MUMBLE MUMBLE
BWHAP
ONE RIDICULOUS OLD BASTARD
TURNED OUT TO BE...
MUMBLE
THIS MYSTERIOUS OLD MAN WHO APPEARED OUT OF NOWHERE

TAP
SWISH
!!
TAP-TAP-TAP
HE FINISHED IN ONLY 10 SHOTS—!!
WHOA—!
WHO IS THIS GUY!!
THIS MAN IS A PROFESIONAL DARTS PLAYER, WHO EVEN BECAME THE U.S. CHAMPION AT ONE POINT DURING HIS CAREER
BUT ACTUALLY
HEH-HEH, HE MAY LOOK LIKE A NORMAL OLD MAN.
FOR REAL!?
-F-

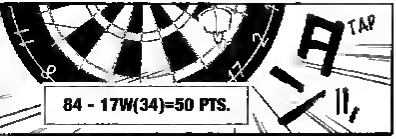
A "NINE DART FINISH" IS THE LOWEST POSSIBLE NUMBER OF THROWS NEEDED TO FINISH A GAME OF "501." EVEN THE BEST PLAYERS IN THE WORLD HAVE DIFFICULTY ACHIEVING THIS RESULT. THIS CONSTITUTES A PERFECT GAME OF DARTS.

YOU NEED A NINE DART FINISH.
I'M SURE I DON'T NEED TO REMIND YOU... THAT IN ORDER TO BEAT A 10-DARTER,
HEH-HEH-HEH, YOU'VE DONE WELL,
...
BUT IT'S ALL OVER NOW.




TAP
321 - 20T(60) × 3=141 PTS.

IS GONNA BE A 9-DARTER!
THIS ...
GOOD!


TAP
84 - 17W(34)=50 PTS.

TAP
141 - 19T(57)=84 PTS.

JUST ONE MORE!!
YEAH—!!

FINISH IT OFF WITH A DOUBLE BULL FOR 50 POINTS—!!
オォォ
オォォ
LAST THROW!!

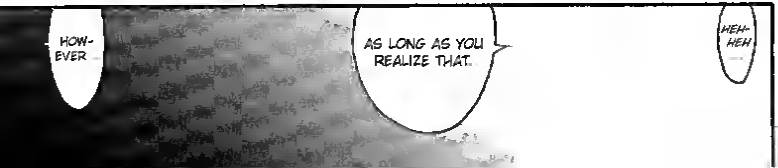
SWISH

TAP
OHHH
OHHH
HE COMPLETED A NINE DART FINISH!!
HE DID IT—!!

YOU DID IT, KYO—!!
WHAT A COME-BACK—!!

KYO KISARAGI'S VISION, ENDURANCE, TENACITY...
YOU WERE RIGHT
DI-REC-TOR
NONE OF THOSE THINGS SHOULD PROVE TO BE A HANDICAP IF HE RETURNS TO SOCIETY

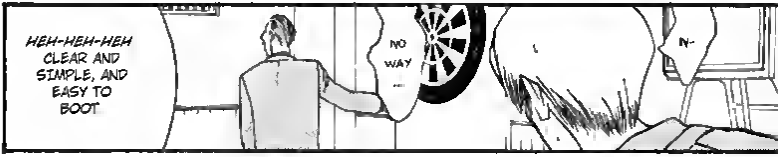
WELL DONE
CLAP
TO BE HONEST, THIS IS QUITE A SURPRISE
CLAP


HOW-EVER
AS LONG AS YOU REALIZE THAT.
HEH-HEH

ABOUT HIS CONCENTRATION.
THIS GAME PROVED NOTHING,
WHAT!?
!? ...WHA
IT WOULDN'T BE A GAME IF NO ONE MADE ANY MISTAKES
OF COURSE HE DID
IN OTHER WORDS HE MADE SOME SORT OF MISTAKE IN EACH OF THE PRIOR GAMES
HOWEVER, HE ONLY MANAGED TO DO IT ONCE
HE JUST TWEEN A FREAKING 9-PARTER!!
WHAT THE HELL WERE YOU JUST WATCHING!?
YES, IN THAT LAST GAME
THAT WASN'T ALL OF THE EMPLOYEES.
YOU LYING SON OF A BITCH—!! YOU PROMISED YOU'D LET KYO GO IF HE BEAT ALL THE EMPLOYEES!!

HE HASN'T PLAYED ME YET.
IF I LOSE, I WILL FREE HIM, AS PROMISED.
DON'T WORRY
FLICK
SO ABOUT THIS GAME
THE RULES ARE VERY SIMPLE.
IS ALL ABOUT MAKING USE OF THAT "ONE AND ONLY" OPPORTUNITY
CONCENTRATION
?
?
YES SIR
GIVE HIM THE BLIND-FOLD.
?
HOW ABOUT A LITTLE GAME THAT WILL TEST KYO'S CONCEN-TRATION.
HOWEVER, AS I SAID EARLIER, LET'S CHANGE UP THE RULES FOR THIS FINAL MATCH.
UCK...!
WHUCK

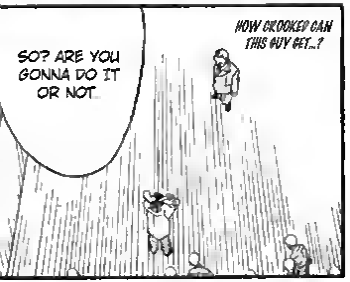
YOU'LL BE HITTING THE APRICOT IN HIS MOUTH USING A DART.
!!


HEH-HEH-HEH CLEAR AND SIMPLE, AND EASY TO BOOT
NO WAY...
IN-

HEH-HEH-HEH
AFTER ALL, THIS APRICOT IS A FAR BIGGER TARGET THAN THE DOUBLE BULL ON THE DARTBOARD.

DIRTY BASTARD...!
.....
I'M GIVING YOU THIS EASY BONUS GAME!
AS A TRIBUTE TO ALL YOUR HARD WORK,

MINORU COULD REALLY GET HURT.
WHAT IF HE MISSES IT?
NO WAY'S HE GONNA DO IT.


SO? ARE YOU GONNA DO IT OR NOT.
HOW CROOKED CAN THIS GUY GET...?

KYO WILL BACK OUT OF THIS MATCH
AND THIS WHOLE THING IS JUST GONNA BE DECLARED A NO-CONTEST
THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT THE DIRECTOR IS THINKING

YES, OF COURSE.
?

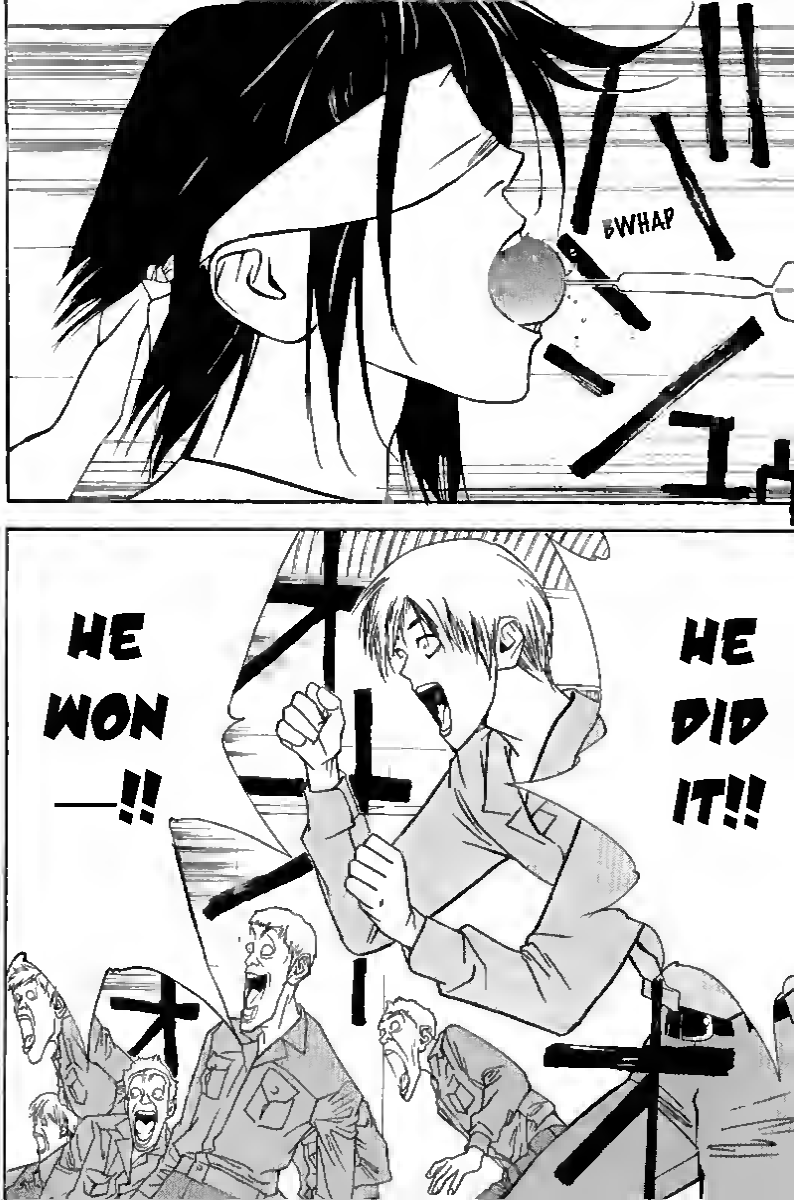
YOU'RE GONNA LET KYO OUT IF HE WINS THIS, RIGHT?
JUST TO BE SURE,

!!!
THEN LET'S DO IT, KYO!
!
IT'S YOUR CHANCE TO GET OUTTA HERE
LET'S GIVE IT A SHOT
PURPOSE ?
YOU'VE GOT A PURPOSE ONCE YOU GET OUTTA HERE
AND BESIDES
DON'T WORRY YOU WON'T HAVE ANY PROBLEMS HITTING A BIG-ASS TARGET LIKE THIS.
BUT !
MAKE IT TO THE TOP WITH THOSE SKILLS !!
AND
YOU KEEP WIN-NING !!
IS TO SHOW OFF YOUR TALENT TO THE REST OF THE WORLD.
GRIP
YOUR PURPOSE...

YOU SHOW 'EM WHAT YOU'RE REALLY MADE OF!!
YOU SHOW THOSE STUPID BASTARDS OUT THERE WHO THINK FEDOTOV PATIENTS ARE USELESS AND HANDICAPPED!!
IT'S GONNA SAVE ALL THE PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD WHO HAVE THEIR POTENTIAL BLOCKED UP 'CAUSE OF STUPID SHIT LIKE PREJUDICE AND DISCRIMINATION!!
YOUR TALENT IS GONNA SAVE ALL OF THESE PATIENTS NO THAT'S NOT ALL
JUST A COUPLE MONTHS AGO, HE WAS CALLING HIMSELF A "USELESS" HUMAN BEING
EVEN KYO
THEY JUST DON'T REALIZE IT
EVERY-BODY HAS POTEN-TIAL
DAMN RIGHT YOU DO!
DO I HAVE POTENTIAL TOO..?
SO GIVE IT A SHOT!!
AND NOW YOU'RE ABOUT TO GRAB A HOLD OF THAT ENORMOUS POTENTIAL INSIDE OF YOU!!

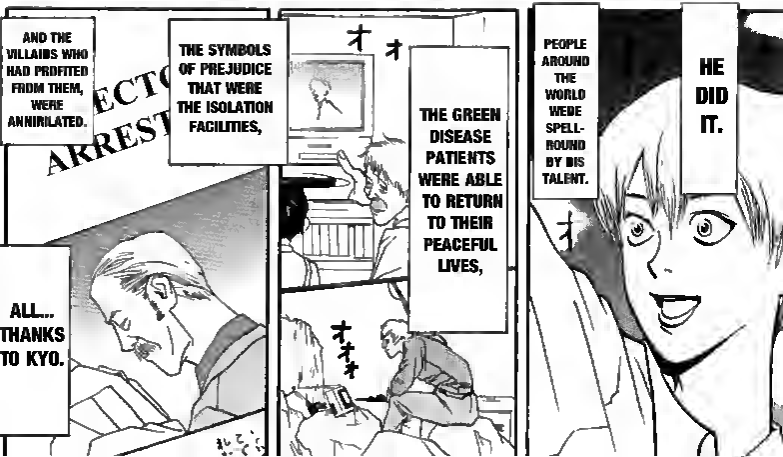
HURRY UP AND PUT A DART THROUGH THIS STUPID TARGET!
NOD
THUMP THUMP THUMP THUMP

WHOOSH


BWHAP
HE WON —!!
HE DID IT!!

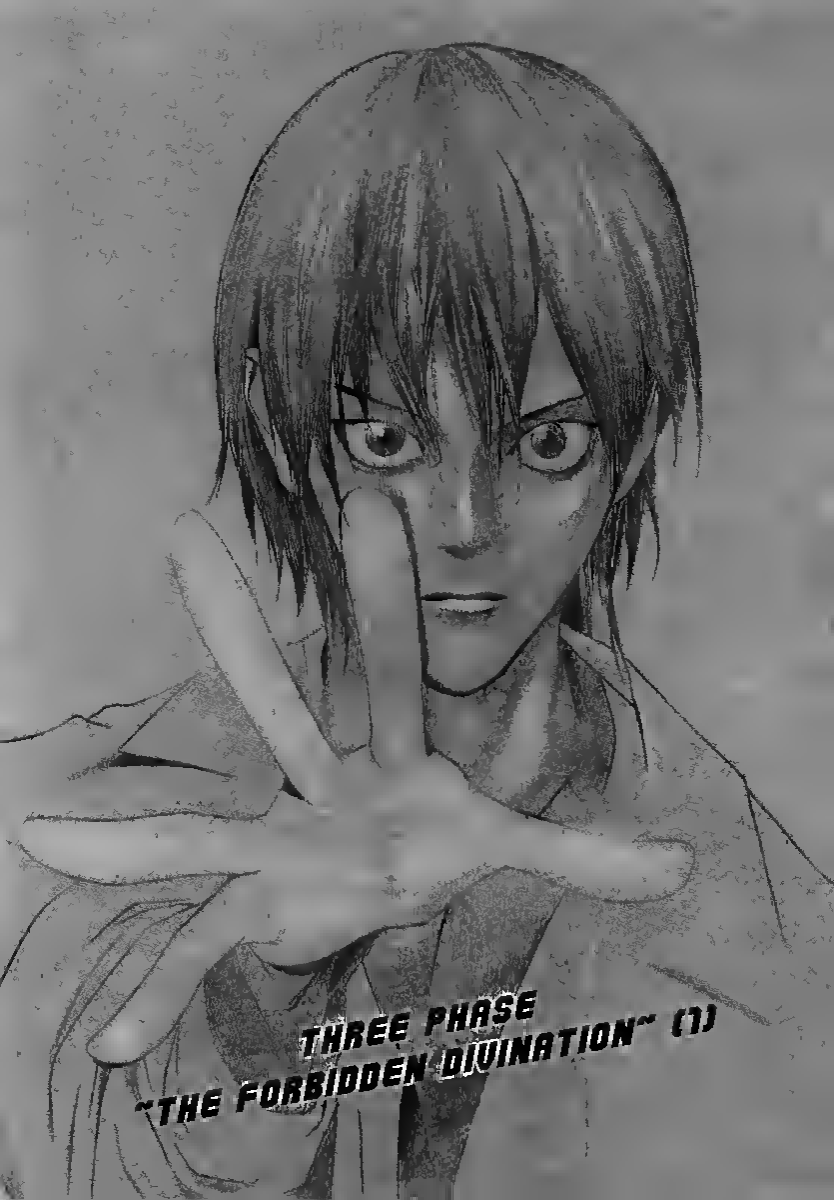
THIS TIME, WE'VE REALLY...! REALLY...!
WE BEAT THEM—!
オオオオ

AMAZING—! A NINE DART FINISH—!
KYO KISARAGI HAS WON THE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS —!!


AND THE VILLAINS WHO HAD PROFITED FROM THEM, WERE ANNIHILATED.
THE SYMBOLS OF PREJUDICE THAT WERE THE ISOLATION FACILITIES,
THE GREEN DISEASE PATIENTS WERE ABLE TO RETURN TO THEIR PEACEFUL LIVES,
PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD WERE SPELLBOUND BY HIS TALENT.
HE DID IT.
ALL... THANKS TO KYO.

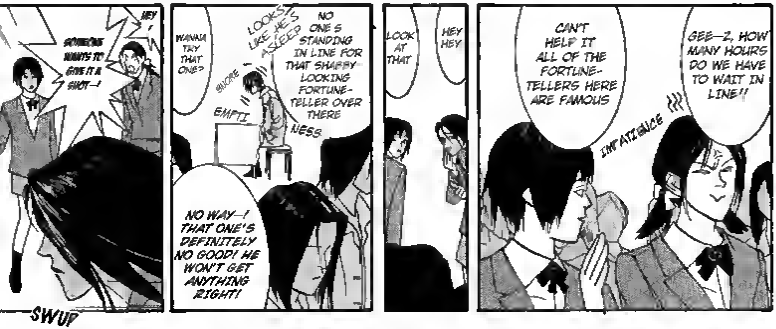
HEY, IT'S KYO
I'M STILL A REGULAR AT THE JOB CENTER.
ME..?
MR MINORU SHIBARA
ALL THE FEDOTOV'S DISEASE PATIENTS IN THE WORLD ARE NOW ABLE TO ENJOY LIFE, THANKS TO HIM
DARTS
YOU ARE SAID TO BE THE WORLD'S FOREMOST CONTRIBUTER TO THE RECOGNITION OF FEDOTOV'S DISEASE PATIENTS. WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ON THAT?
MR KYO KISARAGI !!
OH... CERTAINLY NOT... THE PERSON WHO'S CONTRIBUTED THE MOST IS MY BENEFACTOR. THE ONE WHO TAUGHT ME HOW TO PLAY DARTS
OH! SAME NAME AS YOU, HUH?
DON'T YOU WISH YOU WERE THAT OTHER GUY
I'M STILL THE SAME..
BUT THERE'S ONE THING THAT HAS CHANGED ABOUT ME.
YOU SEE..
NOW I CAN REALLY CALL MYSELF A WORTHY HUMAN BEING. FROM THE HEART.

NINE DARTS (END)


THREE PHASE
~THE FORBIDDEN DIVINATION~ (1)

A CERTAIN STREET IN YOKOHAMA.

THE PLACE IS ALSO KNOWN AS "FORTUNE STREET."
HERE, THE FAMOUS FORTUNETELLERS FROM TV AND MAGAZINES JOSTLE FOR SPACE TO SET UP THEIR DESKS, AND MANY YOUNGSTERS THRONG TO HAVE THEIR FORTUNES TOLD.


HEY!
ANYBODY WANTS IT? GIVE IT A SHOT--!
WANNA TRY THAT ONE?
LOOKS LIKE HE'S A SEER?
NO ONE'S STANDING IN LINE FOR THAT SHABBY LOOKING FORTUNE-TELLER OVER THERE
SHORE
EMPTI
NESS
NO WAY--! THAT ONE'S DEFINITELY NO GOOD! HE WON'T GET ANYTHING RIGHT!
LOOK AT THAT
HEY HEY
CAN'T HELP IT ALL OF THE FORTUNE-TELLERS HERE ARE FAMOUS
IMPATIENCE
GEE--2, HOW MANY HOURS DO WE HAVE TO WAIT IN LINE!!

SWUP
!?
PALM READINGS
WHAP

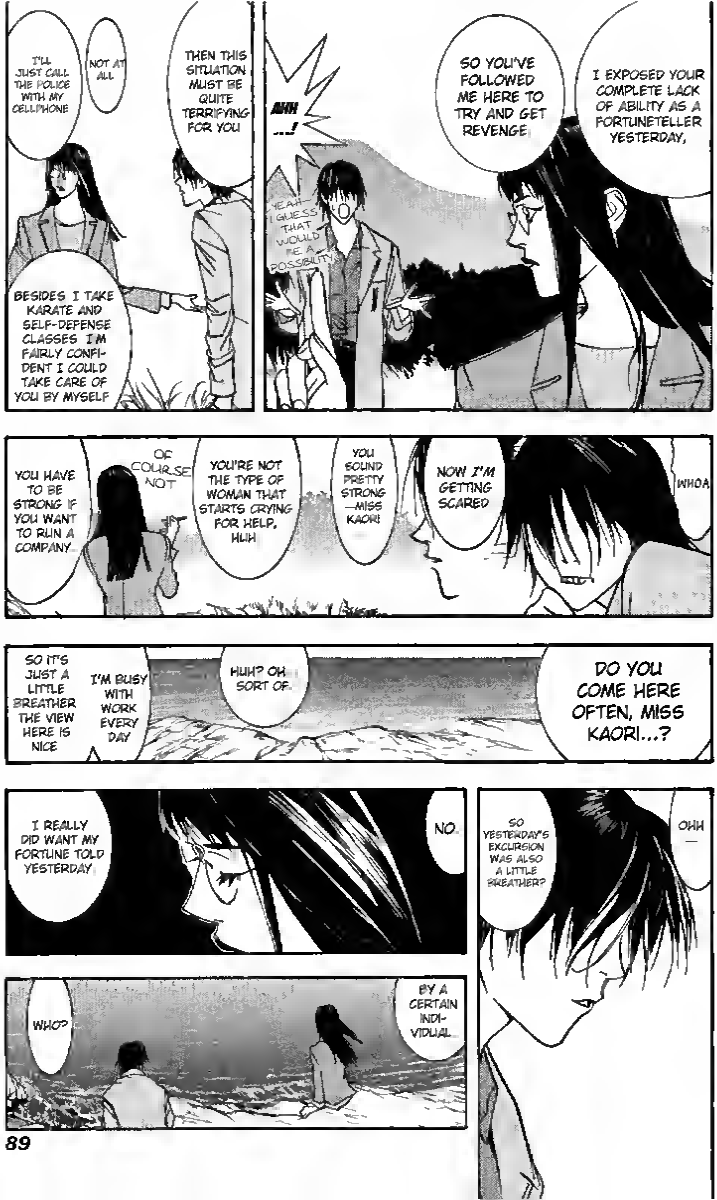
I'LL PAY 1 MILLION
BUT FIRST
I'M GOING TO TEST YOU TO DETERMINE WHETHER YOU TRULY HAVE THE ABILITY TO TELL FORTUNES
NO MONEY UNLESS YOU PASS THE TEST
READ MY FORTUNE
TEST ..?
IT'S EASY
JUST ANSWER THIS ONE QUESTION.
WHY DO I WANT MY FORTUNE TOLD?
I GOT IT
TI...NG
BOTH HANDS PLEASE
AL RIGHT THEN
RIGHT?
YOU WANT TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR BOSS,

ABSOLUTELY WRONG.
I DON'T HAVE A BOSS TO BEGIN WITH
I MAY NOT LOOK LIKE IT, BUT I'M THE CEO OF A COMPANY THAT HANDLES IMPORTED GOODS
DON'T GROUP ME IN WITH THOSE STUPID OFFICE LADIES
AH-HAH HAH... IS THAT RIGHT.
SORRY, JUST PRETEND THIS WHOLE THING NEVER HAPPENED
SWIP
OH...
AND ALSO,
IF YOU WORKED FOR MY COMPANY,
I WOULD FIRE A WORTHLESS MAN LIKE YOU IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE.
DON'T BOTHER STANDING IN LINE FOR HIM.
CLACK
HE WON'T GET ANYTHING RIGHT.
CLACK
CLACK
CLACK
SEE, I TOLD YOU HE'S A FRAUD
AND HE HAS THE NERVE TO SET UP A BEER MARKET? HOW HUMBLE LESS!

SAY THAT ONE MORE TIME!!
A CANCELED FLIGHT!?
THAT'S YOUR EXCUSE FOR DELAYING THE SHIPMENT!?
CLAUSE 1 OF ARTICLE 3 IN THE CONTRACT.
WHIP
SHOULD THERE BE AN UNILATERAL DELAY CAUSED BY ANY OF THE PARTIES INVOLVED, THE PARTY THAT CAUSED THE DELAY SHALL BE CHARGED HALF OF THE TOTAL SHIPMENT COST AS A PENALTY.
NO BUTS.
BUT...
YOUR PEOPLE ARE TO BLAME FOR NOT HAVING A BACKUP PLAN IN CASE SOMETHING WENT WRONG.

YES MAAM.
WRITE UP THE DOCUMENTS IMMEDIATELY, KANEKO.
WHAAA -T!?
SO WE'LL ONLY BE PAYING HALF OF THE ORIGINAL PRICE FOR YOUR SHIP -MENT.
THERE'S A REASON WHY THEY CALL HER THE WOMAN OF STEEL...
WELL
...AAAH THAT BOSS IS HARSH
MY PARENTS SEPARATED WHEN I WAS THREE, AND MY MOTHER RAISED ME ALL BY HERSELF BY WORKING AT A NIGHTCLUB. I LOVE MY MOTHER, AND I'M DEEPLY GRATEFUL FOR ALL THAT SHE'S DONE FOR ME.
...BUT, I HATE THE FACT THAT SHE HAD TO MAKE A LIVING BY FAWNING UPON MEN.
BUT I'VE ACTUALLY TAKEN A LIKING TO THIS NICKNAME.
AFTER ALL, I ALWAYS WANTED TO BE A STRONG WOMAN.
COLD... AND UNYIELDING. THEY MEANT IT AS A SNIDE REMARK
THAT'S WHAT THEY CALL ME.
THE WOMAN OF STEEL.

PHEW—
WAVES
WAVES
THAT WAS ALWAYS MY CHILDHOOD DREAM—
TO LIVE STRONG WITHOUT HAVING TO RELY ON ANYONE—
WELL WELL, IF IT ISN'T THE LADY FROM YESTERDAY!!
ZWUP
!!
HUH—?
I GET IT
OHH
OH I'M JUST TAKING MY DAILY STROLL AROUND TOWN
I STOP BY HERE PRETTY OFTEN.
WHERE THE HELL DID YOU COME FROM!?
WH-WH-WH-


I'LL JUST CALL THE POLICE WITH MY CELLPHONE
NOT AT ALL
THEN THIS SITUATION MUST BE QUITE TERRIFYING FOR YOU
BESIDES I TAKE KARATE AND SELF-DEFENSE CLASSES I'M FAIRLY CONFIDENT I COULD TAKE CARE OF YOU BY MYSELF
AHH ...!
YEAH I GUESS THAT WOULD BE A POSSIBILITY
SO YOU'VE FOLLOWED ME HERE TO TRY AND GET REVENGE
I EXPOSED YOUR COMPLETE LACK OF ABILITY AS A FORTUNETELLER YESTERDAY,
YOU HAVE TO BE STRONG IF YOU WANT TO RUN A COMPANY
OF COURSE NOT
YOU'RE NOT THE TYPE OF WOMAN THAT STARTS CRYING FOR HELP, HUH
YOU SOUND PRETTY STRONG —MISS KAORI
NOW I'M GETTING SCARED
WHOA
SO IT'S JUST A LITTLE BREATHER THE VIEW HERE IS NICE
I'M BUSY WITH WORK EVERY DAY
HUH? OH SORT OF
DO YOU COME HERE OFTEN, MISS KAORI...?
I REALLY DID WANT MY FORTUNE TOLD YESTERDAY
NO.
WHO?
BY A CERTAIN INDIVIDUAL
SO YESTERDAY'S EXCURSION WAS ALSO A LITTLE BREATHER?
OHH —

ASUKA KIRYU.
THE LEGENDARY FORTUNE-TELLER—

MORE THAN JUST RIGHT.
SO THIS PERSON GET HIS FORTUNES RIGHT?
LEGENDARY FORTUNE-TELLER...?

HIS ABILITIES WERE SO STUNNING THAT PEOPLE BEGAN TO REFER TO HIM AS THE CENTER OF THE UNIVERSE.
HE CAN FIGURE OUT ANYTHING ABOUT A PERSON'S PAST LIKE A PSYCHIC, AND EVERYTHING HE SAYS ABOUT THE FUTURE BECOMES REALITY.

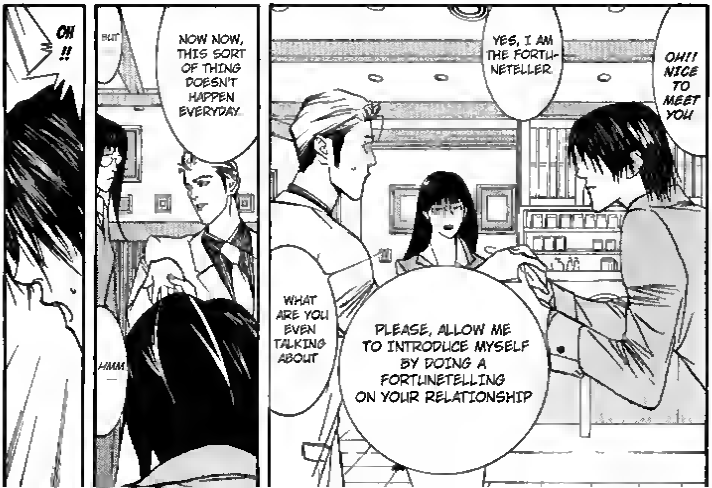
EVEN THE BIG-WIGS OF THE CRIMINAL WORLD?
INFLUENTIAL POLITICIANS, POWERFUL BUSINESSMEN
AND POWERFUL PEOPLE BEGAN TO SEEK OUT HIS SUPER-NATURAL ABILITIES.
THE PUBLIC TOOK INTEREST, OF COURSE
WOW
NO ONE KNOWS WHY.
BUT ONE DAY, ASUKA KIRYU DISAPPEARED WITHOUT A TRACE
EVEN I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT HE LOOKS LIKE, NOT EVEN A PHOTO-GRAPH.
EVERYONE'S TRYING TO FIND HIM
WHO KNOWS
...SO WHERE IS HE NOW?
I DIDN'T EXPECT ANYTHING FROM YOU TO BEGIN WITH.
HEY!! THAT'S RUDE!!
ALL I FOUND WERE A BUNCH OF BOGUS FORTUNE-TELLERS WHO COULDN'T EVEN TELL WHAT I WAS THERE FOR.
I'M ONE OF THOSE BOGUS FORTUNE-TELLERS?
OH... SO,
BUT TO NO AVAIL.
THAT GOT MY HOPES UP, AND I WENT THERE DURING MY FREE TIME.
BUT RECENTLY, I CAME ACROSS A RUMOR THAT SOME-ONE HAD SEEN ASUKA KIRYU ON THAT STREET.

I WAS WRONG THAT ONE TIME.
BUT MY FORTUNES ARE USUALLY PRETTY GOOD —!!
I GOT IT!
HMPH
I'M NOT PAYING YOU.
WANT ME TO GET SOMETHING EXACTLY RIGHT?
PFFT
YOU HAVE A BOYFRIEND, DON'T YOU??
YOU WOULDN'T CALL THAT A FORTU-NETELLING
DOES IT REALLY SURPRISE YOU THAT A WOMAN MY AGE HAS A BOYFRIEND?
LOOK
AWE-SOME—!!
AH-HAH!! SO I'M RIGHT!?

HOW DID THAT FORTUNE-TELLER KNOW MY NAME?
HUH?
OH
BYE
START OVER FROM SQUARE ONE
LA COUPOLE
SO
HE'S SUCH A WEIRD FORTUNE-TELLER
EVEN I COULD GUESS SOMETHING LIKE THAT
HE GOES, "YOU HAVE A BOYFRIEND, DON'T YOU?"
HEY!
HE CAN'T GET ANYTHING RIGHT,
BUT HE'S ALL FULL OF CONFIDENCE, AND WHAT DO YOU THINK HE SAYS?

!!
!!
TAH
WHAT A COINCIDENCE —! WE MEET AGAIN!

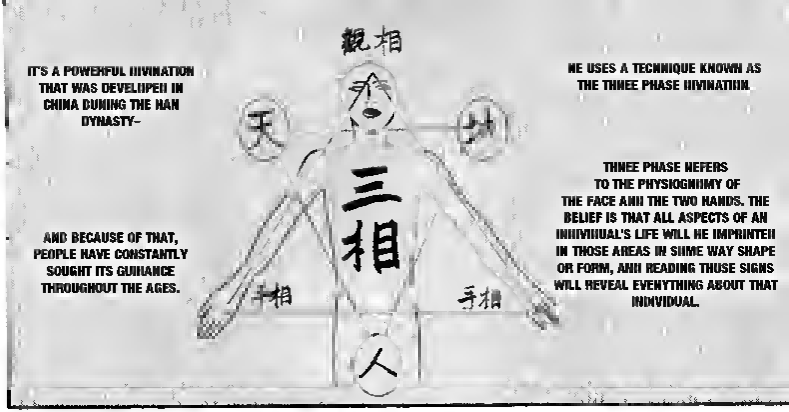
SO THIS IS THE FORTUNE-TELLER.
OHH
THAT'S NO WAY TO TALK TO SOMEBODY.
WH-WH-WHAT IS UP WITH YOU!?

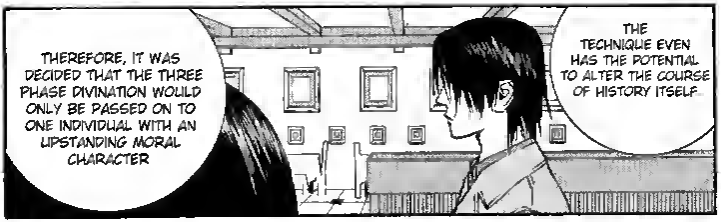

OH !!
BUT
NOW NOW, THIS SORT OF THING DOESN'T HAPPEN EVERYDAY.
HMM
WHAT ARE YOU EVEN TALKING ABOUT
YES, I AM THE FORTU-NETELLER.
OH!! NICE TO MEET YOU
PLEASE, ALLOW ME TO INTRODUCE MYSELF BY DOING A FORTUNETELLING ON YOUR RELATIONSHIP

WONDERFUL!!
GREAT THINGS ARE IN STORE FOR THE TWO OF YOU—!!
...SEE?
HE'S GOT NO IDEA WHAT HE'S TALKING ABOUT SO JUST IGNORE HIM.
OH SHOOT.
THIS LATE ALREADY!
I HAVE TO HEAD OVER TO MY NEXT APPOINT-MENT.
AL-RIGHT!
AH—THAT'S TOO BAD RIGHT WHEN WE GOT TO KNOW EACH OTHER
OH YEAH, WHY DON'T YOU TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO ASK HIM FOR ADVICE ABOUT YOUR WORK?
I WON'T TALK BUSINESS WITH A WEIRDO EVEN IF HELL FREEZES OVER
VERY FUNNY
RIGHT, SEE YOU TOMOR-ROW.
HAH-HAH-HAH...
GOOD LUCK.
AM I THE WEIRDO YOU WERE REFERRING TO?
UHM...
OF COURSE YOU ARE.
SEEMS LIKE YOUR BOYFRIEND IS A PRETTY BUSY GUY
DON'T CALL HIM MY BOY-FRIEND.
HE'S MORE LIKE A PARTNER ... I GUESS.
SOMETIMES A FRIEND, SOMETIMES A RIVAL.
HE'S THE ONLY PERSON I CAN EVER OPEN MY HEART TO.

HE'S ALSO A CEO. HE RUNS A COMPUTER SOFTWARE COMPANY.
HIS NAME IS DAISUKE HANAMURA
WHY DON'T YOU GO TELL SOME MORE BOGUS FORTUNES INSTEAD OF FOOLING AROUND HERE?
ANY-WAYS...
TWO TOP EXECUTIVE DATING EACH OTHER, HUH—
WOW—
BUT YOU SEE,
.....
FORTUNE-TELLING IS SO WONDERFUL BECAUSE OFTENTIMES, IT DOES TURN OUT WRONG
YOU PEOPLE ARE LUCKY YOU DON'T NEED TO TAKE ANY RESPONSIBILITY FOR WHAT YOU SAY
IN MY LINE OF WORK, YOU'RE A LOSER IF YOU CAN'T PULL THROUGH WITH WHAT YOU SAY...
SO I'M FOREVER BRANDED AS THE "FORTUNE-TELLER WHO CAN'T TELL FORTUNES?"
GEEZ
IT'S TRUE THOUGH

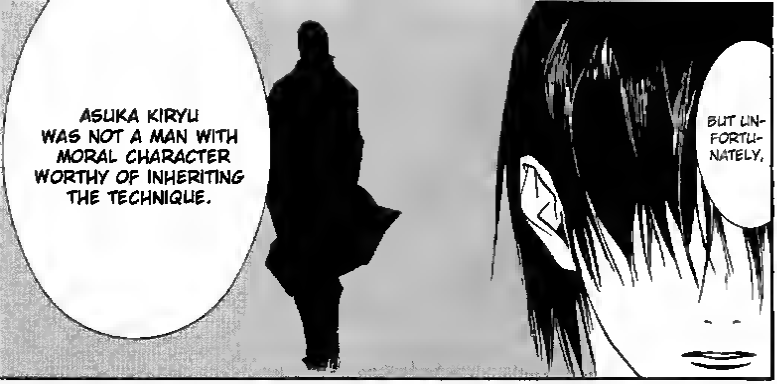
EVERYONE WANTS TO SEE THEIR FUTURE,
BUT WE'RE ABLE TO DREAM BECAUSE WE DON'T KNOW WHAT'S IN STORE FOR US.
DON'T YOU AGREE?
.....
WHAT IS THAT
AN EXCUSE FOR BAD FORTUNE TELLING?
THAT'S NOT REALLY WHAT I MEANT
ACTUALLY, I ALREADY KNEW
ABOUT THAT LEGENDARY FORTUNE-TELLER YOU WERE TALKING ABOUT
I EVEN KNOW WHY HE DISAPPEARED FROM THE FORTUNETELLING INDUSTRY SO SUDDENLY.
HHH!?


IT'S A POWERFUL DIVINATION THAT WAS DEVELOPED IN CHINA DURING THE HAN DYNASTY-
AND BECAUSE OF THAT, PEOPLE HAVE CONSTANTLY SOUGHT ITS GUIDANCE THROUGHOUT THE AGES.
HE USES A TECHNIQUE KNOWN AS THE THREE PHASE DIVINATION.
THREE PHASE REFERS TO THE PHYSIOGNOMY OF THE FACE AND THE TWO HANDS. THE BELIEF IS THAT ALL ASPECTS OF AN INDIVIDUAL'S LIFE WILL BE IMPRINTED IN THOSE AREAS IN SOME WAY SHAPE OR FORM, AND READING THOSE SIGNS WILL REVEAL EVERYTHING ABOUT THAT INDIVIDUAL.
観相
三相
天
人
地
手相
手相

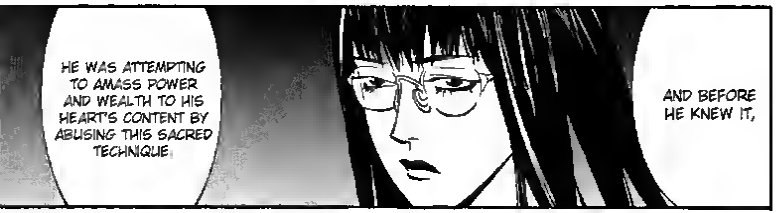

THEREFORE, IT WAS DECIDED THAT THE THREE PHASE DIVINATION WOULD ONLY BE PASSED ON TO ONE INDIVIDUAL WITH AN UPSTANDING MORAL CHARACTER
THE TECHNIQUE EVEN HAS THE POTENTIAL TO ALTER THE COURSE OF HISTORY ITSELF.

THE TECHNIQUE WAS PASSED ON FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS.
QUIETLY BUT ACCURATELY
BUT THE TECHNIQUE ITSELF CONTINUED TO BE PASSED ON THROUGH EACH GENERATION.
FROM THEN ON, THE THREE PHASE DIVINATION DISAPPEARED FROM THE FRONT PAGES OF HISTORY.

EX-ACTLY.
AND ASUKA KIRYU IS THE CURRENT SUCCESSOR


ASUKA KIRYU WAS NOT A MAN WITH MORAL CHARACTER WORTHY OF INHERITING THE TECHNIQUE.
BUT UNFORTUNATELY,

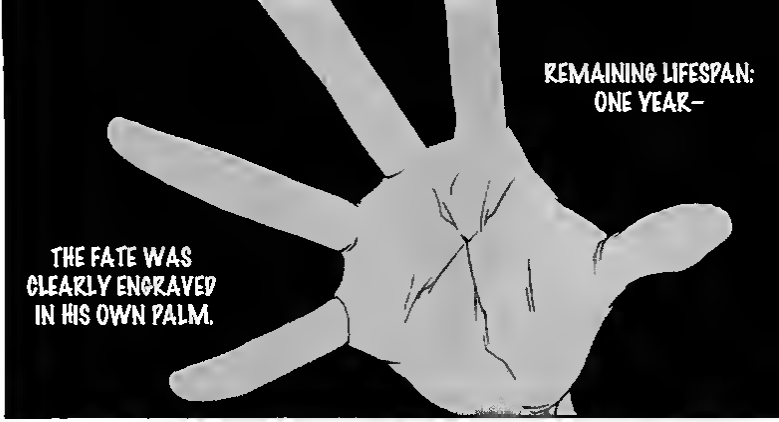
THE REST IS HISTORY... THE POWERFUL AND THE WEALTHY FLOCKED TO HIM FOR ADVICE...
HE CHOSE TO ANNOUNCE HIS SKILLS TO THE WORLD IN EXTRAVAGANT FASHION, AND IMMEDIATELY BECAME THE DARLING OF THE FORTUNETELLING WORLD.

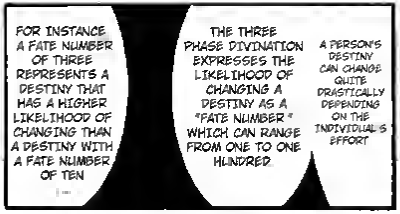

HE WAS ATTEMPTING TO AMASS POWER AND WEALTH TO HIS HEART'S CONTENT BY ABUSING THIS SACRED TECHNIQUE.
AND BEFORE HE KNEW IT,

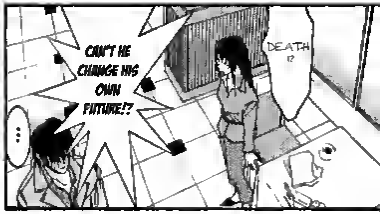
CRA—SH
NO WAY
N

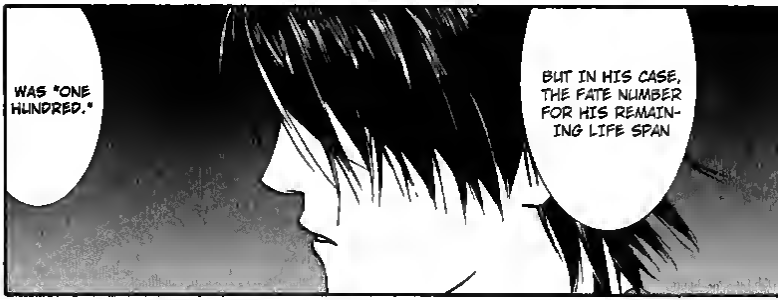
BUT ONE DAY THE MAN TOOK A CASUAL LOOK AT HIS OWN FEATURES AND CAME TO A TERRIBLE REALIZATION.
TRUE FORTUNE-TELLERS NEVER ATTEMPT TO READ THEIR OWN FORTUNE.

HIS MISUSE OF THE TECHNIQUE
BUT THIS DIDN'T CONTINUE FOR LONG
CAME AT A TREMENDOUS PRICE.


REMAINING LIFESPAN: ONE YEAR—
THE FATE WAS CLEARLY ENGRAVED IN HIS OWN PALM.

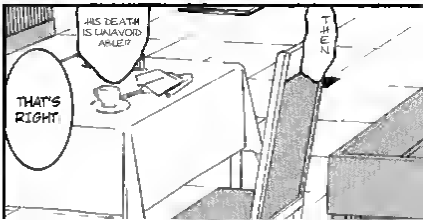

FOR INSTANCE A FATE NUMBER OF THREE REPRESENTS A DESTINY THAT HAS A HIGHER LIKELIHOOD OF CHANGING THAN A DESTINY WITH A FATE NUMBER OF TEN
THE THREE PHASE DIVINATION EXPRESSES THE LIKELIHOOD OF CHANGING A DESTINY AS A "FATE NUMBER" WHICH CAN RANGE FROM ONE TO ONE HUNDRED
A PERSON'S DESTINY CAN CHANGE QUITE DRASTICALLY DEPENDING ON THE INDIVIDUAL'S EFFORT


CAN'T HE CHANGE HIS OWN FUTURE!?
DEATH !?


BUT IN HIS CASE, THE FATE NUMBER FOR HIS REMAINING LIFE SPAN
WAS "ONE HUNDRED."

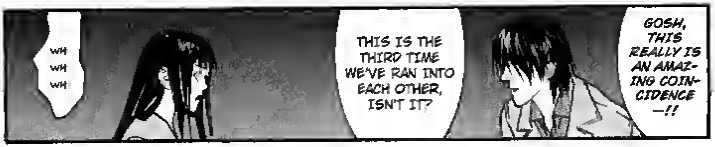
AND WHERE IS HE NOW?

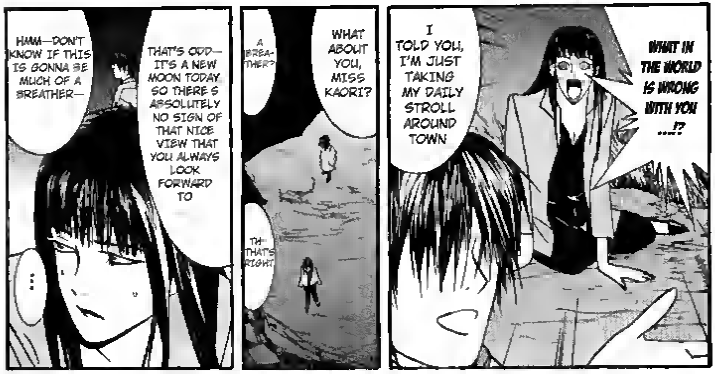
HE DISAPPEARED SO SUDDENLY...
SO THAT'S WHY...

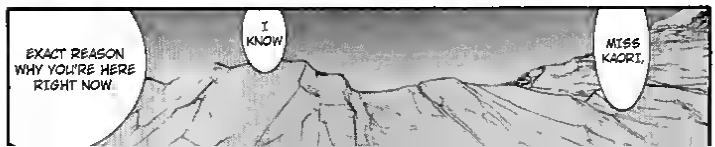

HIS DEATH IS UNAVOIDABLE!?
THAT'S RIGHT.
THEN

WHO KNOWS.
SO KIRYU IS GOING TO DIE—
I SEE—
THUD
Ouch!
GUESS THAT WISH IS NEVER GOING TO BE GRANTED
I WANTED TO MEET HIM.
I WOULD GIVE ANYTHING TO LEARN THIS ONE THING ABOUT MY FUTURE, BUT—
GUESS I WON'T BE SEEING SUKA KIRYU AFTER ALL—

AH-HAH-HAH-HAH! WE MEET AGAIN, MISS KAORI!
YOU ...!
Y-


WH WH WH
THIS IS THE THIRD TIME WE'VE RAN INTO EACH OTHER, ISN'T IT?
GOSH, THIS REALLY IS AN AMAZING COINCIDENCE —!!


HMM—DON'T KNOW IF THIS IS GONNA BE MUCH OF A BREATHER—
THAT'S ODD— IT'S A NEW MOON TODAY SO THERE'S ABSOLUTELY NO SIGN OF THAT NICE VIEW THAT YOU ALWAYS LOOK FORWARD TO
...
A BREATHER?
WHAT ABOUT YOU, MISS KAORI?
TH-THAT'S RIGHT
I TOLD YOU, I'M JUST TAKING MY DAILY STROLL AROUND TOWN
WHAT IN THE WORLD IS WRONG WITH YOU ...!?


EXACT REASON WHY YOU'RE HERE RIGHT NOW.
I KNOW
MISS KAORI,

YOU CAME HERE TO DIE, DIDN'T YOU?
!!

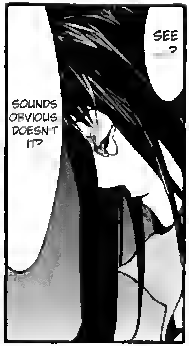
IM-PULSE?
DON'T JUST SAY STUFF OUT OF IMPULSE
IS IT BECAUSE I'M STAND-ING ON A CLIFF? YOU'RE SUCH A SIMPLETON
OF COURSE NOT!
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
WHA...
!
DO YOU REALLY THINK I'VE BEEN SAYING ALL THIS OUT OF IMPULSE?
I KNEW YOU WERE GOING TO BE HERE.
WH AT
WH AT..?
THAT'S NOT ALL
AND THE TIME WE MET AT THE RESTAU-RANT.
THE FIRST TIME I SAW YOU HERE,
NOT JUST TODAY

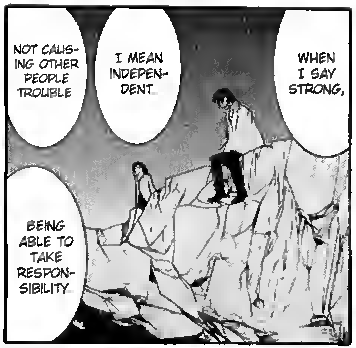
I KNOW YOUR NAME ...
THAT YOUR BIRTHDAY WAS JULY 2ND,
THAT YOU HAVE TYPE O BLOOD,
THAT YOU'RE A SINGLE CHILD AND YOUR PARENTS DIVORCED WHEN YOU WERE THREE,
THAT YOU WON A DEBATE CONTEST WHEN YOU WERE IN HIGH SCHOOL
AND THAT YOU HAVE THIS HIDDEN IN YOUR COAT POCKET
!!
!!
WILL
WHAP
THAT DAY—WHEN YOU SHOWED ME YOUR PALMS AT THE FORTUNE TELLING STREET IN YOKOHAMA,
I LEARNED YOUR DESTINY

I'M THE PRACTITIONER OF THREE PHASE, THE FORBIDDEN DIVINATION.
MY NAME IS ASUKA KIRYU.
YOU !?
Y-
WHAT YOU'RE FEELING RIGHT NOW?
CAN YOU EXPLAIN TO ME
THE THREE PHASE DIVINATION ALLOWS ME TO SEE AN INDIVIDUAL'S LIFE SPAN
BUT IT DOESN'T ALLOW ME TO SEE WHAT'S GOING ON INSIDE THE HEART
I CAN'T JUST SIT BACK AND WATCH YOU TAKE YOUR OWN LIFE LIKE THIS
THAT'S WHY,
AS I SAID BEFORE, I'M DESTINED TO DIE WITHIN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS
EVEN THOUGH I STILL WANT TO LIVE

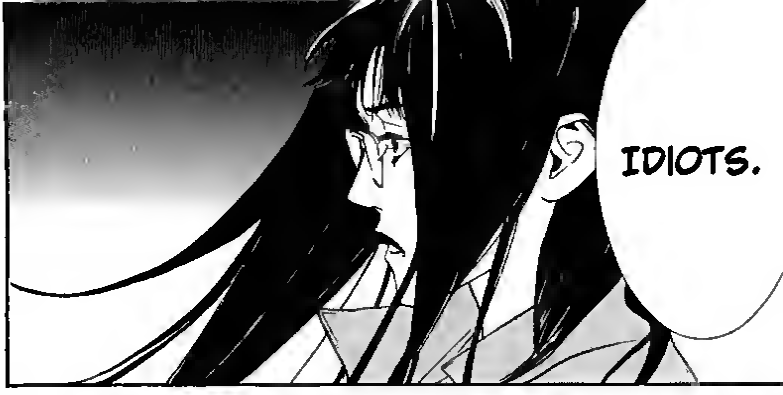
HUMANS OUGHT TO BE STRONGER.
I THINK ...

BUT STILL,
DON'T YOU THINK THERE'S TOO MANY WEAK ADULTS IN THE WORLD RIGHT NOW. WHO CAN'T EVEN DO THE THINGS THAT SOUND SO OBVIOUS?

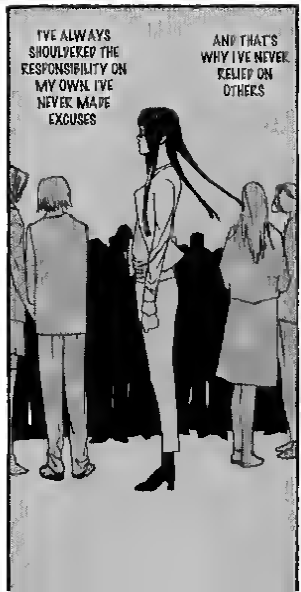

SEE ...?
SOUNDS OBVIOUS DOESN'T IT?


WHEN I SAY STRONG,
I MEAN INDEPEN-DENT.
NOT CAUS-ING OTHER PEOPLE TROUBLE
BEING ABLE TO TAKE RESPON-SIBILITY.

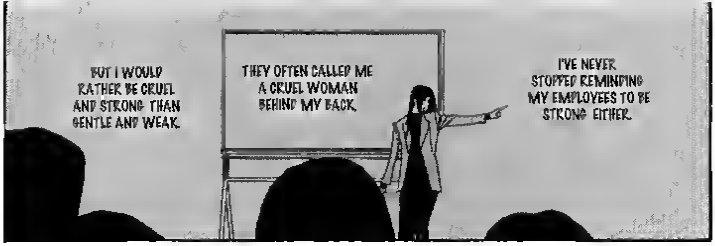
I DID NOTHING WRONG. I'M JUST DOING MY BEST. IT'S SOMEONE ELSE'S FAULT, NOT MINE!
"RECESSIONS, LAYOFFS, BANK-RUPTCY ... IT'S SOCIETY'S FAULT THAT MY LIFE IS DIFFICULT! IT'S THE GOVERNMENT'S FAULT!
"WHAT ARE THOSE POLITICIANS DOING!! IMPROVE THE ECONOMY!! CREATE MORE JOBS!!"
THE INCOMPETENT ONES COMPLAIN THE MOST

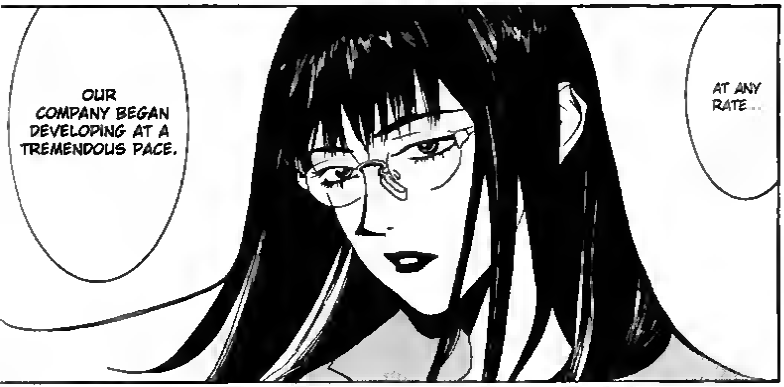

IDIOTS.

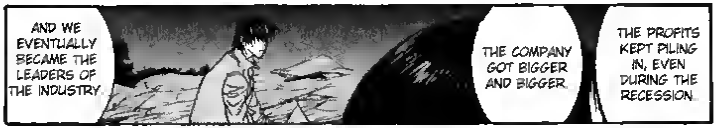
WEAK HUMAN BEINGS LOOKING FOR THE EASY WAY OUT.
THEY'RE BABIES.
THEY'RE BUSY COMING UP WITH EXCUSES WHILE THEY MAKE OTHERS DO THE WORK.

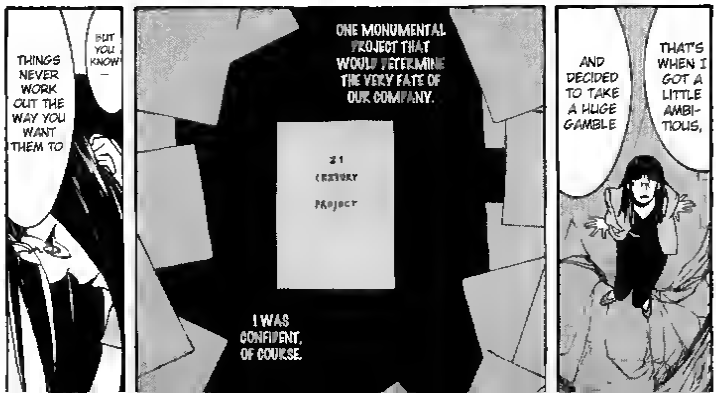

I'VE ALWAYS SHOULDERED THE RESPONSIBILITY ON MY OWN. I'VE NEVER MADE EXCUSES
AND THAT'S WHY I'VE NEVER RELIED ON OTHERS

MAY BE A WOMAN BUT I WILL ALWAYS LIVE STRONG ... THAT'S MY POLICY.
NOT ME. I NEVER WANT TO LIVE LIKE THAT.


BUT I WOULD RATHER BE CRUEL AND STRONG THAN GENTLE AND WEAK.
THEY OFTEN CALLED ME A CRUEL WOMAN BEHIND MY BACK.
I'VE NEVER STOPPED REMINDING MY EMPLOYEES TO BE STRONG EITHER.


OUR COMPANY BEGAN DEVELOPING AT A TREMENDOUS PACE.
AT ANY RATE...


AND WE EVENTUALLY BECAME THE LEADERS OF THE INDUSTRY.
THE COMPANY GOT BIGGER AND BIGGER.
THE PROFITS KEPT PILING IN, EVEN DURING THE RECESSION.


BUT YOU KNOW—
THINGS NEVER WORK OUT THE WAY YOU WANT THEM TO
ONE MONUMENTAL PROJECT THAT WOULD DETERMINE THE VERY FATE OF OUR COMPANY.
21 CENTURY PROJECT
I WAS CONFIDENT, OF COURSE.
AND DECIDED TO TAKE A HUGE GAMBLE
THAT'S WHEN I GOT A LITTLE AMBI-TIOUS,

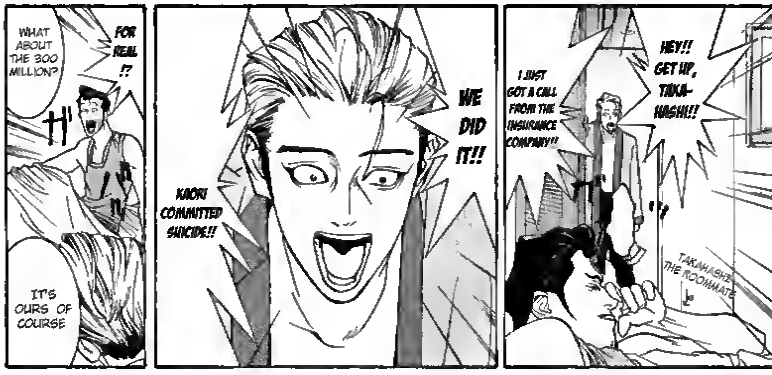
THE PROJECT TURNED OUT TO BE AN ABSOLUTE FAILURE—
IT PUT THE COMPANY INTO AN IRREPARABLE AMOUNT OF DEBT
I TRIED MY BEST TO RECOVER THE LOSSES
BUT— IT WAS TOO LATE
FUNDS HAD GONE STRAIGHT DOWN THE DRAIN
WE RECEIVED A NOTICE FROM THE BANK
THE SECOND NOTICE SHOULD BE COMING IN SOON—
OUR COMPANY IS GOING BANKRUPT
BUT I DIDN'T RUN
I TOOK ALL THE CRITICISM HEAD-ON AND I DID MY BEST TO COMPENSATE OUR BUSINESS PARTNERS AND EMPLOYEES
BUT YOU SEE
THERE'S ONE PERSON THAT I HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO REPAY YET
THAT PERSON IS,
DAISUKE HANAMURA.

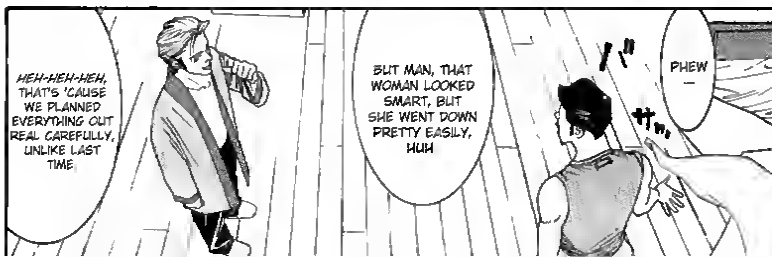
HE HELPED ME OUT SO MUCH WHEN I WAS STARTING UP THE PROJECT
AND HE EVEN SIGNED ON AS A GUARANTOR FOR THE CORPORATE LOAN.
BUT I ENDED UP BETRAYING HIS TRUST
IF I'M FORCED TO DECLARE BANKRUPTCY THE DEBT ON HIS PART IS GOING TO BE—
300 MILLION.
WHOA.
THAT'S TOUGH.
HOWEVER—
THERE IS ONE SIMPLE SOLUTION TO THIS PROBLEM.
MY DEATH.
!!
I HAVE A 300 MILLION YEN LIFE INSURANCE POLICY, WITH HIM LISTED AS THE BENEFICIARY.
SO... IF I DIE, HE WON'T HAVE TO SUFFER FROM MY DEBTS.
WHAT ...!?
THAT'S INSANE !!
YOU DON'T NEED TO THROW AWAY YOUR OWN LIFE JUST FOR THE SAKE OF RESPONSIBILITY ...!!

THERE'S NO OTHER WAY!!
I CAN'T JUST STAND BY AND WATCH HIM SUFFER BECAUSE OF ME!!
THIS IS MY LIFE!! MY AESTHETIC!!
PLEASE, THINK THIS OVER!!
WAIT !!
MISS KAORI !!
DASH
SO LEAVE ME ALONE!!
HUH? HAVEN'T YOU HEARD?
OH YOU SEE ...
WHAT ABOUT HER?
UHH —THIS IS REGARDING MS. KAORI MASUMURA ...
HELLO, IS THIS MR. DAISUKE HANAMURA? I'M CALLING ON BEHALF OF SUNNY LIFE INSURANCE ...
YES?
TRRR
TRRR

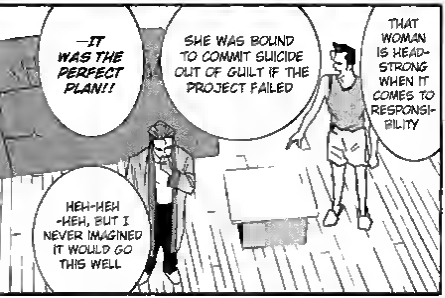
!!
MS. KAORI MATSUMURA... PASSED AWAY LAST NIGHT.
I UNDERSTAND THIS ISN'T THE BEST TIME TO TALK ABOUT THIS... I'LL CONTACT YOU WITH THE DETAILS ON THE INSURANCE PAYMENT AT A LATER DATE
NO... I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS...
UHH...
SHE COMMITTED SUICIDE. WE'VE FOUND HER WILL
WE BELIEVE SHE THREW HERSELF OFF A DESOLATE CLIFF NEAR YOKOSUKA...
S-SHE'S DEAD!?
HUH...!?
GACHUK

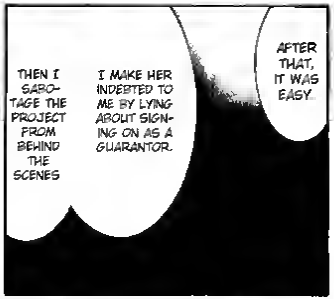
SMIRK


WHAT ABOUT THE 300 MILLION?
FOR REAL !?
IT'S OURS OF COURSE
WE DID IT!!
KAORI COMMITTED SUICIDE!!
I JUST GOT A CALL FROM THE INSURANCE COMPANY!!
HEY!! GET UP, TAKA-HASHI!!
TAKAHASHI THE ROOMMATE


HEH-HEH-HEH, THAT'S 'CAUSE WE PLANNED EVERYTHING OUT REAL CAREFULLY, UNLIKE LAST TIME
BUT MAN, THAT WOMAN LOOKED SMART, BUT SHE WENT DOWN PRETTY EASILY, HUH
PHEW —

I GO IN PRETENDING TO BE THE CEO OF A COMPUTER SOFTWARE COMPANY, MAKING ME THE IDEAL BUSINESS PARTNER
THEN I GIVE HER A TASTE OF MY AMAZING SKILLS IN BED, AND GET HER TO FALL FOR ME

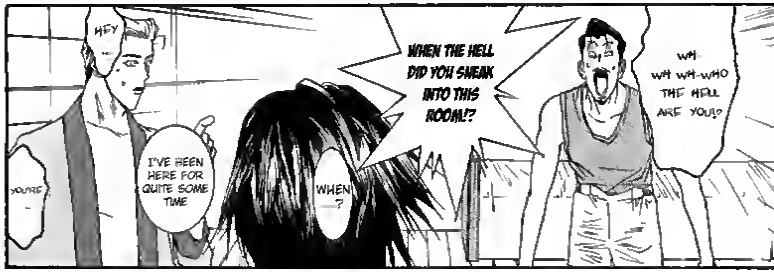

THAT WOMAN IS HEAD-STRONG WHEN IT COMES TO RESPONSIBILITY
SHE WAS BOUND TO COMMIT SUICIDE OUT OF GUILT IF THE PROJECT FAILED
—IT WAS THE PERFECT PLAN!!
HEH-HEH -HEH, BUT I NEVER IMAGINED IT WOULD GO THIS WELL


AFTER THAT, IT WAS EASY.
I MAKE HER INDEBTED TO ME BY LYING ABOUT SIGNING ON AS A GUARANTOR.
THEN I SABOTAGE THE PROJECT FROM BEHIND THE SCENES

EITHER WAY, THAT 300 MILLION IS GONNA BE ALL OURS TOMORROW!!
THAT SHOULD LAST US FOR QUITE A WHILE !!

REMEMBER WHEN WE FAKED THAT CAR ACCIDENT TO COLLECT SOME INSURANCE MONEY?
THAT KINDA STUFF AIN'T GONNA WORK TWICE.
WE GOTTA USE OUR HEADS FROM NOW ON.

SO THAT'S WHAT IT WAS.
OHH—
BLA—M
!!


HEY
I'VE BEEN HERE FOR QUITE SOME TIME
YOU'RE
WHEN?
WHEN THE HELL DID YOU SNEAK INTO THIS ROOM!?
WH WH WH-WHO THE HELL ARE YOU?

AH?
I'M HONORED
OH, SO YOU REMEMBER ME?
WHAT DO YOU WANT!?

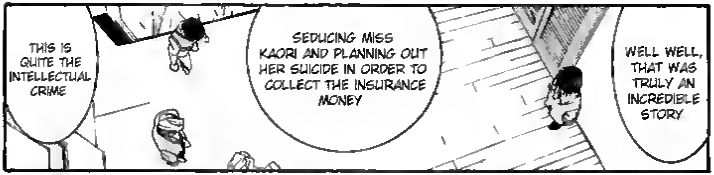
FOR TIME-TELLER!!
YOU'RE THAT...

I CAME ACROSS ONE VERY COMPELLING FATE LINE.
WHEN I READ YOUR PALM THE OTHER DAY,
WELL, YOU SEE

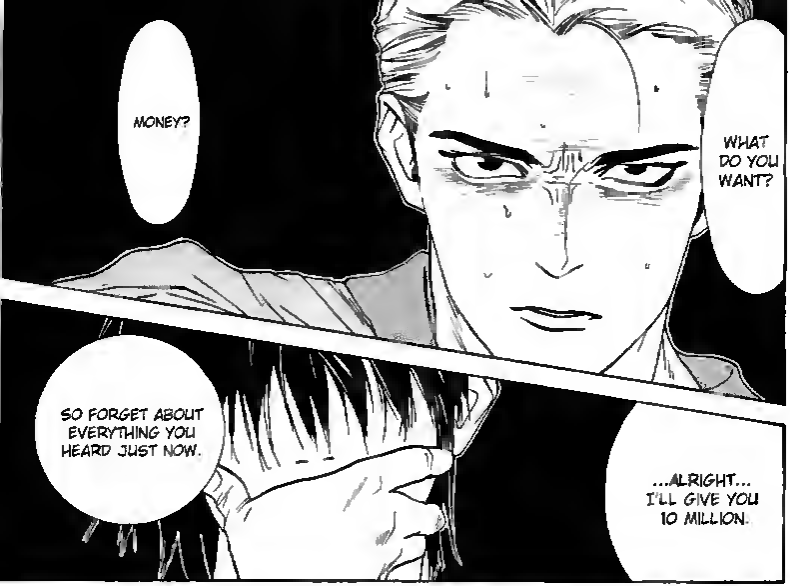
SOME-THING LIKE THAT.
"ON THIS DAY, AT THIS VERY LOCATION, DAISUKE HANAMURA WILL BE TELLING SOMEONE A VERY INTERESTING STORY."

THAT WAS A VERY INTERESTING STORY YOU SHARED JUST NOW.
GEE—I REALLY AM A GOOD FORTUNE TELLER, IF I MAY SAY SO MYSELF.
.....

IT WAS QUITE A HORRIFYING STORY.
...IN FACT,


THIS IS QUITE THE INTELLECTUAL CRIME
SEDUCING MISS KAORI AND PLANNING OUT HER SUICIDE IN ORDER TO COLLECT THE INSURANCE MONEY
WELL WELL, THAT WAS TRULY AN INCREDIBLE STORY

SHH!
BWHUP
YOU'VE ALSO FAKED A CAR ACCIDENT IN ORDER TO COLLECT INSURANCE MONEY...?
AND... WHAT ELSE...?


MONEY?
WHAT DO YOU WANT?
SO FORGET ABOUT EVERYTHING YOU HEARD JUST NOW.
...ALRIGHT... I'LL GIVE YOU 10 MILLION.

FORGET ALL ABOUT THE THINGS I HEARD YOU DISCUSSING TODAY.
FHWEE
SOUNDS GOOD— I'LL FORGET ABOUT THIS.
10 MILLION !!
WOW- YOU'RE A SMART MAN, MR. HANAMURA.

10 MILLION IS NOTHING. SURE YOU CAN HAVE IT.
THE BENEFICIARY FOR KAORI'S LIFE INSURANCE I'LL BE GETTING 300 MILLION TOMORROW.
BUT THERE'S JUST ONE BIG PROBLEM.
HEY HEY, WEREN'T YOU LISTENING TO OUR CONVERSATION?
?
YOU CAN REALLY PAY ME THAT MUCH MONEY.
BUT ONLY IF.

MISS KAORI ISN'T REALLY DEAD.
BLAM
!!
I MADE A CALL RIGHT HERE FROM MY CELL-PHONE
DIDN'T YOU NOTICE?
OH THAT WAS ME
Wait a sec. Then that call just now—
Wh
Wh
Wh
THANK YOU, MR FORTUNE-TELLER YOU REALLY DO GET YOUR FORTUNES RIGHT!
Wa
Wha
FOR NOT BEING DEAD
SORRY

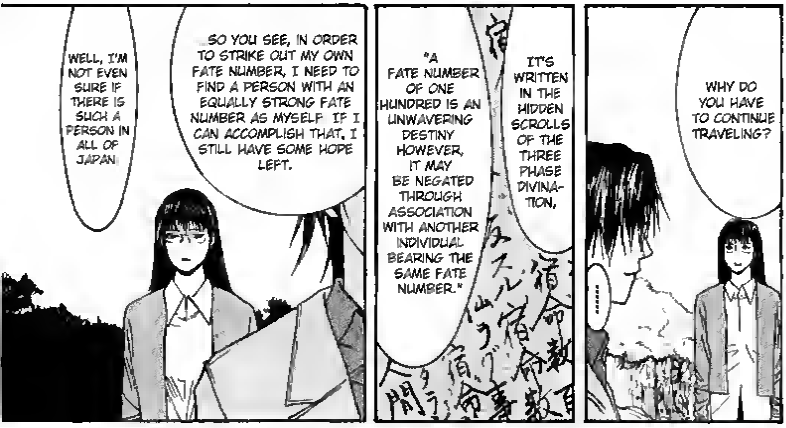
SORRY, BUT YOU'RE NOT GETTING THAT 300 MILLION.
IN FACT
AND I WAS ABLE TO RECORD EVERY LAST WORD OF THAT CONVERSATION JUST NOW.
YOU ACCURATELY PREDICTED THIS MAN'S EVERY MOVE.
Lick
Lick
ONCE I HAND THIS TAPE OVER TO THE POLICE, YOU WON'T EVEN BE ABLE TO LIVE IN THE OUTSIDE WORLD ANY LONGER.
YOU BIIIITCH —!!

GRACK
IN THE COURT-ROOM.
I'LL SEE YOU.
...EEK...!
THUD
BEING BETRAYED AND THEN HAVING TO HEAR ALL THOSE HORRIBLE THINGS...
HONESTLY, I WAS A BIT WOR-RIED.
YOU WERE TRULY STRONG TODAY.
MISS KAORI

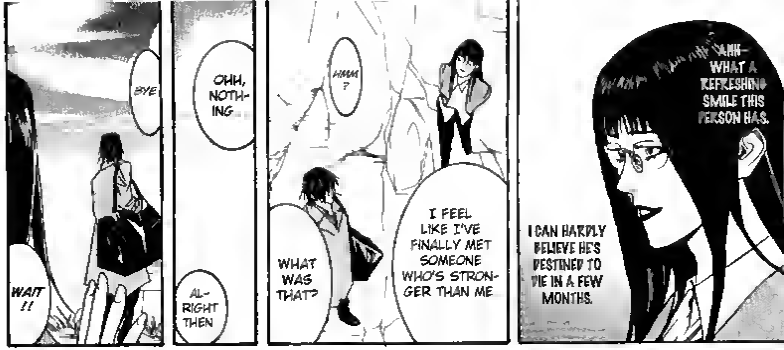
YOU WERE GREAT.
BUT YOU WERE STRONG TILL THE VERY END, MISS KAORI.
THAT'S LIFE IN THE BUSINESS WORLD...
SLANDER ... BETRAYAL ...
THAT WAS NOTHING.
I ACTUALLY KNEW THE ANSWER TO THAT QUESTION.
"WHY DO I WANT MY FORTUNE TOLD?"
HUH?
THE ANSWER TO THE QUESTION YOU ASKED ME WHEN WE FIRST MET.
THAT REMINDS ME I NEVER GAVE YOU MY REAL ANSWER
YOU WON'T GET ANYTHING DONE IF YOU CAN'T TAKE THE PAIN
...ISN'T THAT RIGHT?
THE ANSWER WAS, "WILL DAISUKE HANAMURA BE ABLE TO LIVE HAPPILY EVEN IF I DIE."

YOU WERE PREPARED TO END YOUR LIFE BUT YOU JUST COULDN'T GET THAT QUESTION OFF YOUR MIND
I KNOW, MISS KAORI.
YOUR STRENGTH IS BRILLIANT. BUT WHAT'S TRULY WONDERFUL ABOUT YOU ...
IS YOUR KIND-NESS ...
...UCK
...UCK
WAHHHHHHHHHHH

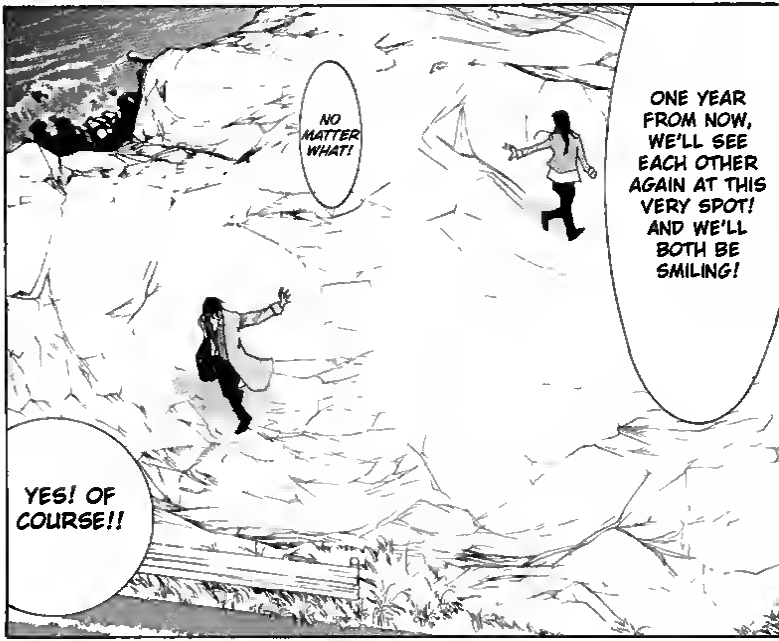
I'M QUITE SHORT ON TIME
YES
YOU'RE GOING ALREADY?


WELL, I'M NOT EVEN SURE IF THERE IS SUCH A PERSON IN ALL OF JAPAN.
SO YOU SEE, IN ORDER TO STRIKE OUT MY OWN FATE NUMBER, I NEED TO FIND A PERSON WITH AN EQUALLY STRONG FATE NUMBER AS MYSELF. IF I CAN ACCOMPLISH THAT, I STILL HAVE SOME HOPE LEFT.
"A FATE NUMBER OF ONE HUNDRED IS AN UNWAVERING DESTINY. HOWEVER, IT MAY BE NEGATED THROUGH ASSOCIATION WITH ANOTHER INDIVIDUAL BEARING THE SAME FATE NUMBER."
IT'S WRITTEN IN THE HIDDEN SCROLLS OF THE THREE PHASE DIVINATION.
WHY DO YOU HAVE TO CONTINUE TRAVELING?
.....

I'M GOING TO FIND THAT ONE PERSON NO MATTER WHAT.
BUT I'M NOT GIVING UP!

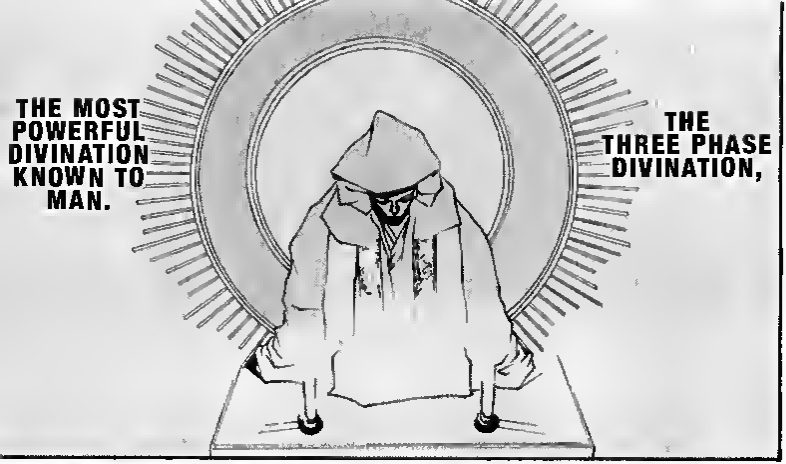

BYE
WAIT !!
OHH, NOTHING
ALRIGHT THEN
HMM ?
WHAT WAS THAT?
I FEEL LIKE I'VE FINALLY MET SOMEONE WHO'S STRONGER THAN ME
I CAN HARDLY BELIEVE HE'S DESTINED TO DIE IN A FEW MONTHS.
AHH- WHAT A REFRESHING SMILE THIS PERSON HAS.

?
PROMISE ME, ASUKA!!


NO MATTER WHAT!
ONE YEAR FROM NOW, WE'LL SEE EACH OTHER AGAIN AT THIS VERY SPOT! AND WE'LL BOTH BE SMILING!
YES! OF COURSE!!

CLAMP 著作 講談社 刊行

THREE PHASE
~THE FORBIDDEN DIVINATION~ (2)



THE THREE PHASE DIVINATION WAS DEVELOPED IN CHINA DURING THE HAN DYNASTY. BUT ITS ENORMOUS POWER MEANT IT WOULD CONSTANTLY BE MANIPULATED BY THE RULERS OF EACH GENERATION.

FEARING THAT THE DIVINATION WOULD THROW SOCIETY INTO CHAOS, THE SEERS DECIDED,

IT EXTENDS BEYOND MERE FORTUNE TELLING, INTO THE REALM OF "PROPHECY."

ONCE A PERSON SHOWS THEIR THREE PHASES (THE FACE AND HANDS), THEIR PAST IS EXPOSED, AND THEIR FUTURE REVEALED.

ALL OTHER DIVINATIONS PALE IN COMPARISON.

THAT THE THREE PHASE DIVINATION WOULD ONLY BE PASSED DOWN TO ONE INDIVIDUAL OF OUTSTANDING MORAL CHARACTER!!

AND THAT MAN IS HERE,

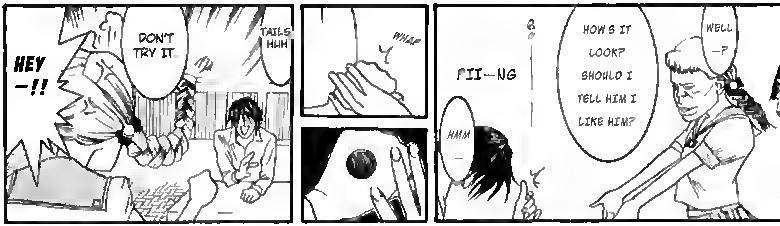
IN JAPAN–

DOES THE TECHNIQUE STILL EXIST?

IT DOES. ONE MAN HAS CARRIED ON THE TRADITION

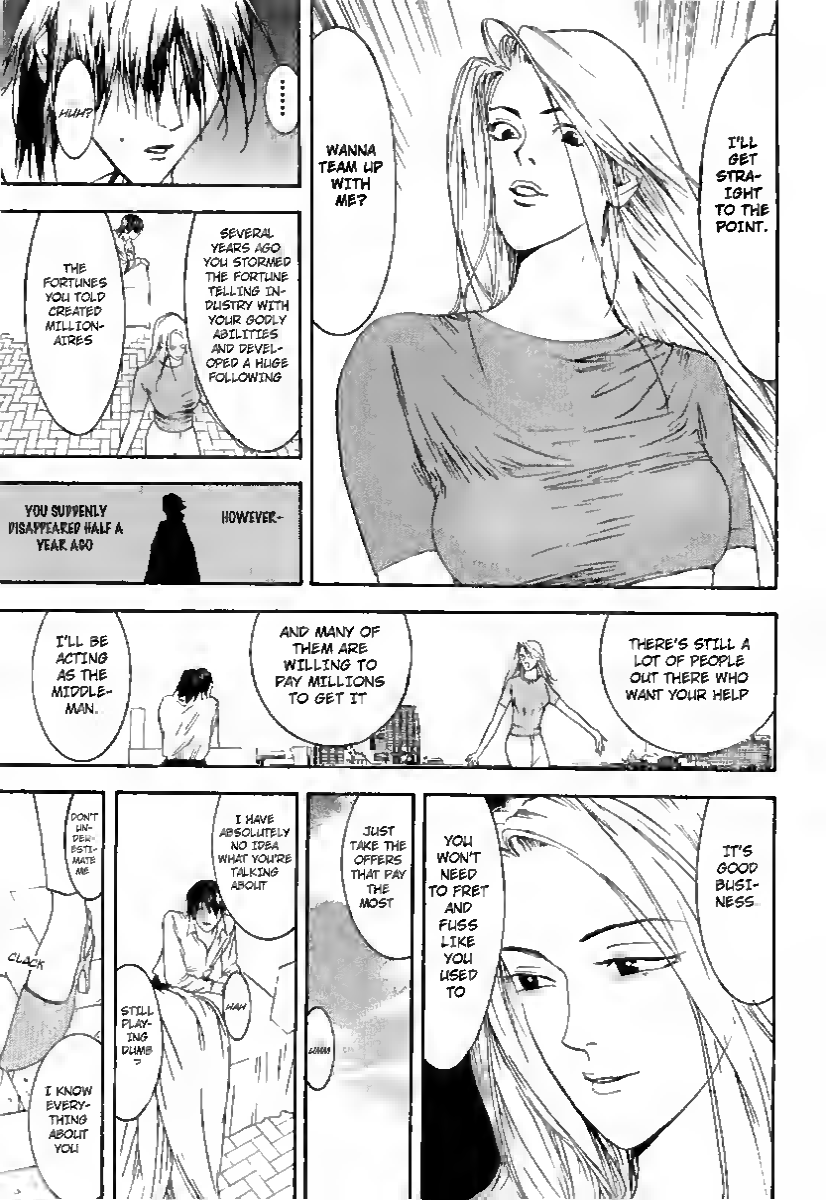
BUT EVEN AFTER DISAPPEARING FROM THE FRONT PAGES OF HISTORY, THE TECHNIQUE WAS SECRETLY PASSED DOWN THROUGH THE AGES.

FROM THAT DAY ON, THE DIVINATION BECAME A LEGEND...

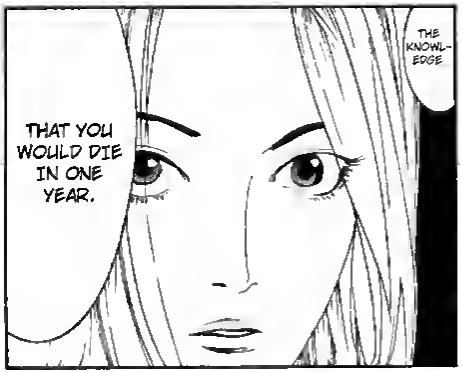

HEY —!!
DON'T TRY IT.
TAILS HUH
WHAP
FII—NG
HMM
HOW S IT LOOK? SHOULD I YELL HIM I LIKE HIM?
WELL —?

... HAH-HAH-HAH.
WAIT, MY MONEY ...!
WANT A PHONY FORTUNE TELLER?! LET'S GO!!

I'M NOT HERE FOR MY FOR-TUNE
I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT. BUT CAN YOU SHOW ME YOUR HANDS?
OH ...
MR ASUKA KIRYU, THE RIGHTFUL SUCCESSOR OF THE THREE PHASE DIVINATION
I'VE FOUND YOU AT LAST.

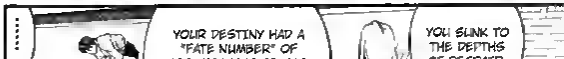

HUH?
.....
WANNA TEAM UP WITH ME?
I'LL GET STRAIGHT TO THE POINT.
THE FORTUNES YOU TOLD CREATED MILLIONAIRES
SEVERAL YEARS AGO YOU STORMED THE FORTUNE TELLING INDUSTRY WITH YOUR GODLY ABILITIES AND DEVELOPED A HUGE FOLLOWING
YOU SUDDENLY DISAPPEARED HALF A YEAR AGO
HOWEVER-
I'LL BE ACTING AS THE MIDDLEMAN.
AND MANY OF THEM ARE WILLING TO PAY MILLIONS TO GET IT
THERE'S STILL A LOT OF PEOPLE OUT THERE WHO WANT YOUR HELP
DON'T UNDERESTIMATE ME
CLACK
I KNOW EVERYTHING ABOUT YOU
I HAVE ABSOLUTELY NO IDEA WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT
AHH
STILL PLAYING DUMB
JUST TAKE THE OFFERS THAT PAY THE MOST
UMMM
YOU WON'T NEED TO FRET AND FUSS LIKE YOU USED TO
IT'S GOOD BUSINESS

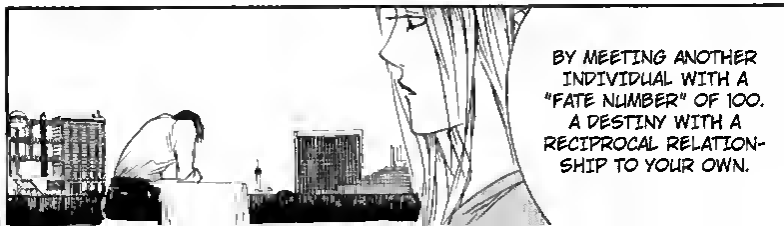
INCLUDING THE REASON WHY YOU DISAPPEARED.


THE KNOWLEDGE
THAT YOU WOULD DIE IN ONE YEAR.

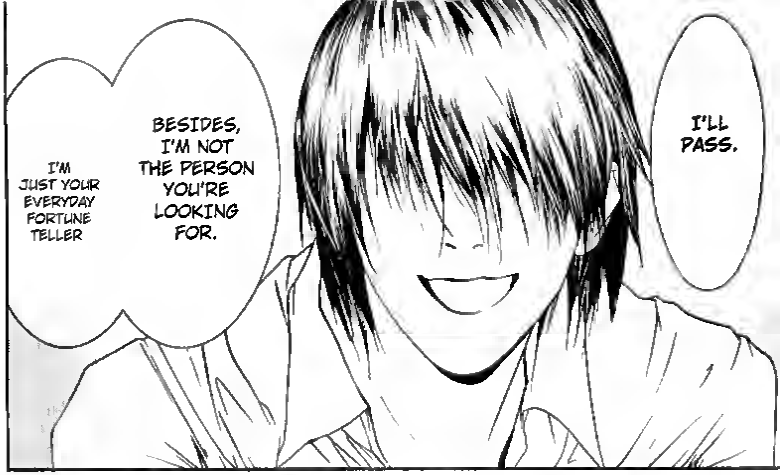
YOU DISCOVERED SOMETHING YOU DIDN'T WANT TO KNOW—YOUR OWN DESTINY.
YOUR PROPHETIC ABILITIES TURNED OUT TO BE A DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD

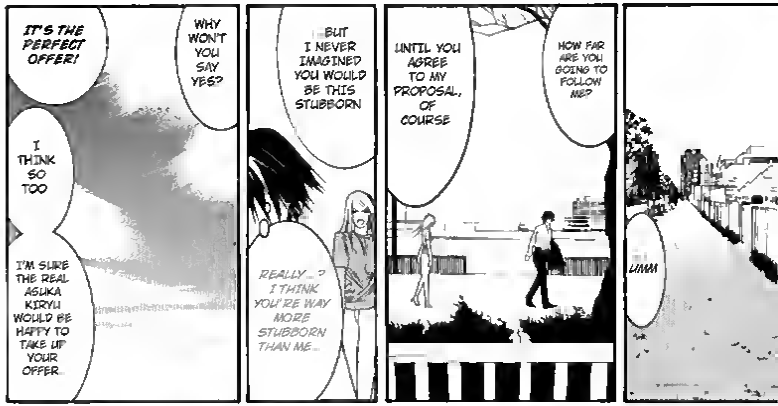
BUT THERE IS ONE WAY TO AVOID THIS DESTINY
THAT IS


.....
YOUR DESTINY HAD A "FATE NUMBER" OF 100, MEANING IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO CHANGE
YOU SUNK TO THE DEPTHS OF DESPAIR


BY MEETING ANOTHER INDIVIDUAL WITH A "FATE NUMBER" OF 100. A DESTINY WITH A RECIPROCAL RELATIONSHIP TO YOUR OWN.

I'VE PREPARED THE THING YOU WANT THE MOST TO REPAY YOU FOR YOUR SERVICES.
THAT'S WHY
I KNOW YOU NO LONGER HAVE ANY INTEREST IN MONEY WITH THAT TIME LIMIT ON YOUR LIFE.
THAT'S WHY YOU ABANDONED ALL THE FAME AND FORTUNE YOU HAD AMASSED—
AND BEGAN TRAVELING IN SEARCH OF THAT "DESTINED PERSON."
I'M OFFERING.
!?
THE HANDPRINTS OF 2 MILLION INDIVIDUALS.
HMM—
WITH 2 MILLION SAMPLES, YOUR CHANCES OF DISCOVERING THAT ONE DESTINY WILL INCREASE EXPONENTIALLY, DON'T YOU THINK?
EVEN IF YOU LOOK AT 100 PALMS EACH DAY, YOU'LL ONLY GET 30 THOUSAND OR SO OVER A YEAR...
THAT'S 2 MILLION DESTINIES.
WELL?
I'VE OBTAINED THAT DATA FROM INSIDE SOURCES.
A CERTAIN COUNTRY WITH A DRAFT SYSTEM REQUIRES A HANDPRINT TO ENTER THE MILITARY.
HEH-HEH... YOU JUST HAVE TO KNOW WHERE TO LOOK.
HOW DID YOU ...!?


I'LL PASS.
BESIDES, I'M NOT THE PERSON YOU'RE LOOKING FOR.
I'M JUST YOUR EVERYDAY FORTUNE TELLER


IT'S THE PERFECT OFFER!
WHY WON'T YOU SAY YES?
I THINK SO TOO
I'M SURE THE REAL ASUKA KIRYU WOULD BE HAPPY TO TAKE UP YOUR OFFER.
BUT I NEVER IMAGINED YOU WOULD BE THIS STUBBORN
REALLY...? I THINK YOU'RE WAY MORE STUBBORN THAN ME...
UNTIL YOU AGREE TO MY PROPOSAL, OF COURSE
HOW FAR ARE YOU GOING TO FOLLOW ME?
UMM

.. HUH?
YOU SAID THE REAL ASUKA KIRYU WOULD TAKE THIS OFFER, DIDN'T YOU
GRIP
WHAT WAS THAT?

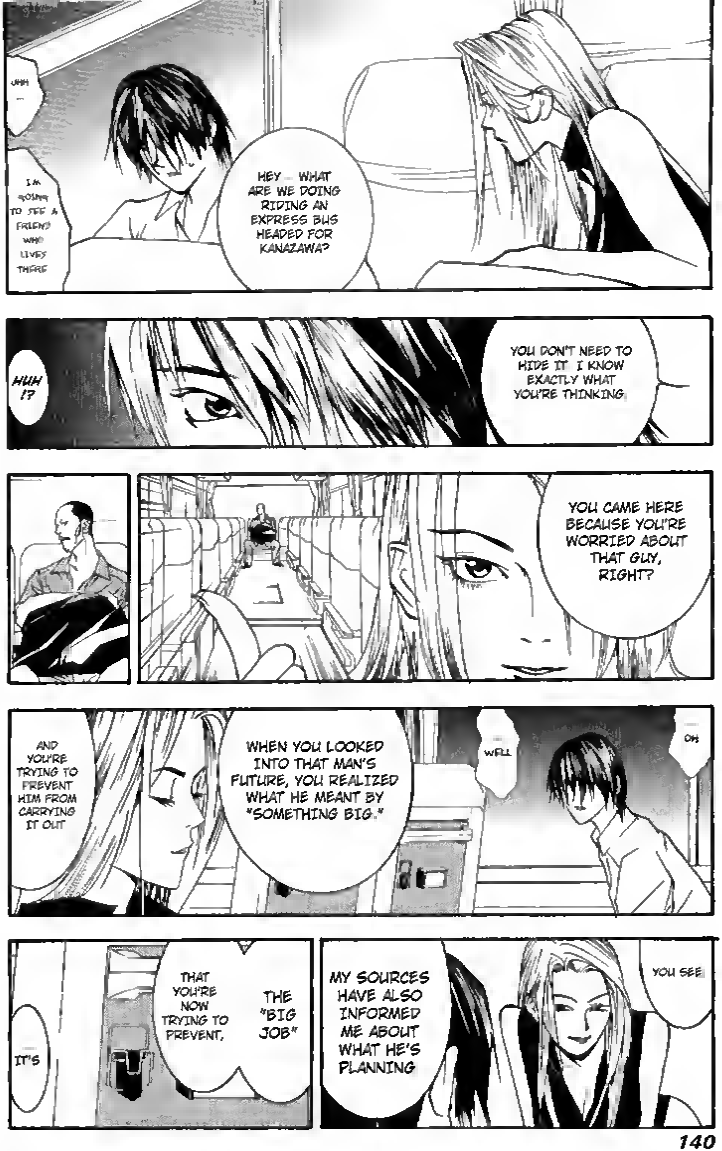
YOU'LL TAKE THE JOB IF I CAN PROVE YOU'RE THE REAL ASUKA KIRYU, RIGHT?
THAT MEANS
OH
IF I CAN WITNESS THAT MOMENT, I'LL KNOW YOU'RE THE REAL ASUKA KIRYU.
WITHIN 48 HOURS, YOU'LL DEFINITELY MAKE A PROPHECY THAT ONLY ASUKA KIRYU WOULD BE ABLE TO MAKE.
WHICH MEANS YOU'LL HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO AGREE TO MY OFFER.
I KNOW !!
!?
HEH-HEH
WHAT COUNTS AS A PROPHECY THAT ONLY ASUKA KIRYU WOULD BE ABLE TO MAKE?
UMM...
IF I DON'T SEE IT WITHIN 48 HOURS, I'LL NEVER APPEAR IN FRONT OF YOU AGAIN.

HOW MANY DAYS SOMEONE HAS LEFT TO LIVE,
WHEN AN ACCIDENT'S GOING TO HAPPEN,
STUFF LIKE THAT.
ONE MORE QUESTION.
I SEE
HAH
NO PROBLEM.
ARE YOU SURE YOU HAVE A CHANCE OF WINNING?
A PERSON WHO CAN MAKE PERFECT PREDICTIONS CAN ALSO MAKE PREDICTIONS THAT WILL NEVER COME TRUE.
I PROMISE
WILL YOU REALLY PROMISE NEVER TO APPEAR IN FRONT OF ME AGAIN?
IF I WIN,

THEN I'LL GIVE IT A SHOT
YES —!!
ALRIGHT THEN EXACTLY 48 HOURS FROM NOW
READY —?
GO!
NO ONE'S COMING
2 CUSTOMERS IN 5 HOURS?
SORRY ABOUT BEING SO UNPOPULAR GUESS THIS REALLY CUTS INTO YOUR CHANCES
OH WELL
BEEP
THERE'S STILL A LOT OF TIME LEFT
THE NEXT DAY-
?
UMM ...
ARE YOU SURE YOU DON'T NEED TO FOLLOW THE CUSTOMERS?
YOU WON'T KNOW WHETHER IT'S GOING TO COME TRUE OR NOT
DOES SHE REALLY EXPECT TO WIN LIKE THIS ?
WON'T
YOU'LL BE MAKING YOUR IMPORTANT PROPHECY SOON.

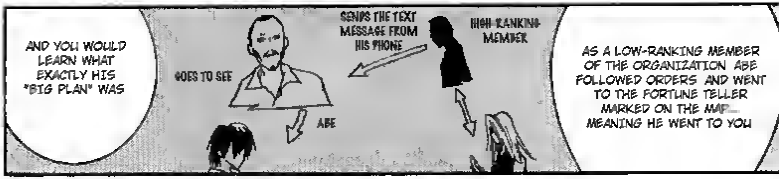
OH
SURE
MAY I SEE YOUR HANDS, PLEASE?
CAN YOU READ MY FOR-TUNE?
UHH—
ONE MOMENT, PLEASE...
IS IT GONNA GO WELL?
I'M ABOUT TO DO SOMETHING BIG
WHAT

DON'T WORRY. YOU WORK—
WILL DEFINITELY BRING ABOUT GOOD RESULTS.
TH-ANK YOU
.....
HEY
WHERE ARE YOU GOING ?
WHUP
SNORK
I JUST REMEMBERED SOMETHING IMPORTANT
...OH UMM


UHH...
I'M GOING TO SEE A FRIEND WHO LIVES THERE
HEY... WHAT ARE WE DOING RIDING AN EXPRESS BUS HEADED FOR KANAZAWA?
HUH!?
YOU DON'T NEED TO HIDE IT I KNOW EXACTLY WHAT YOU'RE THINKING.
YOU CAME HERE BECAUSE YOU'RE WORRIED ABOUT THAT GUY, RIGHT?
AND YOU'RE TRYING TO PREVENT HIM FROM CARRYING IT OUT
WHEN YOU LOOKED INTO THAT MAN'S FUTURE, YOU REALIZED WHAT HE MEANT BY "SOMETHING BIG."
WELL
OH
IT'S
THAT YOU'RE NOW TRYING TO PREVENT,
THE "BIG JOB"
MY SOURCES HAVE ALSO INFORMED ME ABOUT WHAT HE'S PLANNING
YOU SEE

A BUS-JACKING.
...YEP... HE'S GOING TO TRY AND HIJACK THIS BUS.
HIS NAME IS TAKESHI ABE
HE'S A FANATICAL MEMBER OF THE GALALAZALA CULT, WHICH SHOCKED THE COUNTRY BY ORGANIZING A LARGE-SCALE SERIAL KILLING A FEW YEARS AGO.
TURNS OUT THE CULT'S BEEN PLANNING THIS BUS-JACKING FOR ABOUT A MONTH.
AND TODAY IS THE DAY.
I GOT THIS INFO FROM A HIGH-RANKING CULT MEMBER, SO I'M POSITIVE.
WELL? ISN'T MY INTEL AMAZING?
BY THE WAY, REMEMBER HOW HE CAME ASKING FOR HIS FORTUNE?
I PLANNED THAT WHOLE THING
HUH!?
I USED THE HIGH-RANKING CULT MEMBER WHO LEAKED ME THE INFO.
I GOT THEM TO SEND ABE THIS TEXT MESSAGE
!!

BEFORE YOU CARRY OUT THE OPERATION, GO TO THE SPOT MARKED ON THE MAP BELOW. YOU WILL FIND AN EXTREMELY ABLE FORTUNE TELLER WAITING THERE. HE WILL GIVE YOU STRENGTH.


AND YOU WOULD LEARN WHAT EXACTLY HIS "BIG PLAN" WAS
GOES TO SEE
ABE
SENDS THE TEXT MESSAGE FROM HIS PHONE
HIGH-RANKING MEMBER
AS A LOW-RANKING MEMBER OF THE ORGANIZATION ABE FOLLOWED ORDERS AND WENT TO THE FORTUNE TELLER MARKED ON THE MAP... MEANING HE WENT TO YOU

A MAN WITH A LIMITED LIFESPAN.
CAN'T STAND TO WATCH PEOPLE THROW AWAY THEIR LIVES.

!!
THERE'S NO WAY ASUKA KIRYU COULD SIT BY KNOWING THAT A CRIME IS ABOUT TO UNFOLD.

I ARRANGED THIS WHOLE THING
SO YOU SEE,
HEH HEH HEH
JUST TO WIN THIS LITTLE GAME AGAINST YOU.

NOW JUST GET RID OF THAT MANIAC FOR US, OKAY?
YOU'VE OBVIOUSLY LOST!
MEANING, YOU TOOK ACTION TO TRY AND PREVENT HIM FROM CARRYING OUT THE CRIME
YOU PREDICTED HIS FUTURE. THERE'S NO DOUBT ABOUT IT
VRR
VRRRRR
AS EXPECTED, YOU GOT ON THIS BUS
I-I... DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THAT.
TH-THAT GUY'S SERIOUSLY GOING TO HIJACK THIS BUS...?
I WOULDN'T HAVE GOTTEN ON KNOWING SOMETHING THIS DANGEROUS WAS ABOUT TO HAPPEN!!
GEEZ!! WHY WOULDN'T YOU TELL ME SOMETHING THAT IMPORTANT BEFOREHAND!?
LOOK
ANYWAYS... WHAT WAS THAT? IS THAT GUY REALLY GOING TO HIJACK THIS BUS?
I REALLY JUST HAPPENED TO GET ON THIS BUS!!
I'M NOT!!
LOOK, JUST STOP BOKING AROUND AND
!!
WHAP

STAY WHERE YOU ARE!! DON'T MOVE FROM YOUR SEATS!!
HEY!! QUIT YAPPING AROUND!!
AHHH!!
BAA-NO
I TOLD YOU NOT TO MOVE —!!
WHAT!? WHAT!?
RABBLE
OH NO... HE'S STARTING IT.
RABBLE
WHAT'S GOING ON!?
THE EXPRESS BUS IS BEING HIJACKED —!!
IT'S A BUS-JACKING ...!!

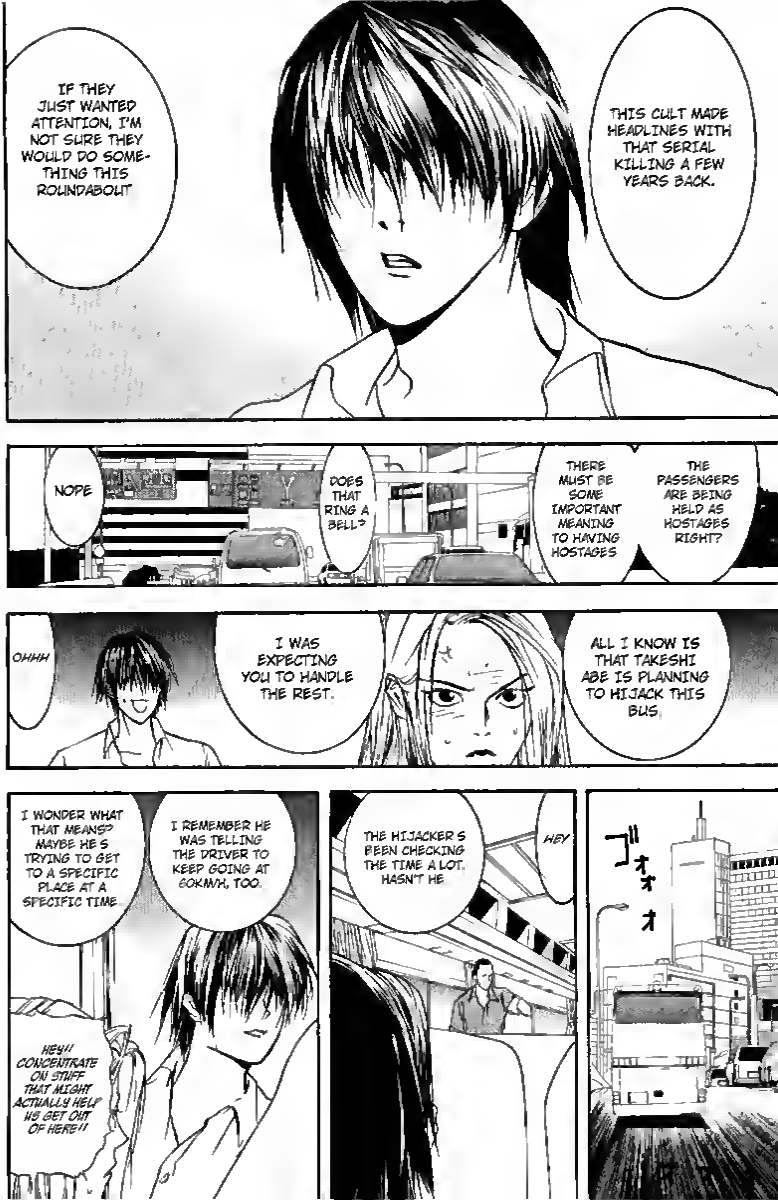
W-WAIT A SECOND
YOU REALLY DIDN'T KNOW THIS WAS GOING TO HAPPEN!?
FFF-FFFK
OF COURSE NOT!!
IF I HAD, I WOULD'VE DONE SOME-THING ABOUT IT ALREADY!!
.....
HEY DRIVER!! CHANGE OF DESTINATIONS!!
TURN AROUND AND GET BACK ON THE METROPOLITAN EXPRESSWAY!
OKAY
OH SHIT
ALRIGHT!! EVERYONE ON THIS BUS IS NOW A HOSTAGE!!
I'LL FUCKING KILL ANYONE THAT TRIES ANYTHING FUNNY!!
GOT THAT!!?
FFFFFK

I'M RACKING MY BRAIN FOR IDEAS!
YOU DON'T NEED TO TELL ME!! I'M TRYING!!
BUT DO SOMETHING ABOUT THIS!
HEY LOOK!!
IF YOU WEREN'T ABLE TO PREDICT THIS SITUATION, THAT'S FINE!
WHAT ?
...BUT YOU KNOW
SO I LOSE EITHER WAY THAT DOESN'T GET ME TOO MOTIVATED
YOU'RE JUST GOING TO SAY I WAS ABLE TO DO IT BECAUSE I KNEW THE CRIME WAS GOING TO HAPPEN ALL ALONG, AND USE THAT TO DRAG ME INTO YOUR SHADY ENTERPRISE
EVEN IF I WERE TO FIND A WAY TO GET RID OF THIS CRIMINAL...
AWESOME!! NOW I'M TOTALLY MOTIVATED.
REALLY ?
JUST HURRY UP AND THINK OF A WAY TO GET US OUT OF HERE!
FINE... LET'S FORGET ABOUT THE GAME

IF IT ISN'T MR. FORTUNE TELLER
OH
ALRIGHT THEN, HOW DO WE GET OUT OF HERE...
I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING AGAINST YOU
SORRY...
YES, WHAT A COINCI-DENCE...
HI
I'M NOT GONNA DO ANYTHING IF YOU JUST SIT TIGHT AND FOLLOW MY ORDERS.
DON'T WORRY.
...IDIOT
LET'S JUST SIT TIGHT
HE SAID HE'S NOT GONNA DO ANYTHING TO US.
KEEP CIRCLING AROUND THE INNER HIGHWAY AT 60KM/H UNTIL I TELL YOU TO STOP.
GOOD, KEEP GOING.

EEEK
I'LL FUCKING KILL YOU IF YOU START SPEEDING UP
PUFFF
ACK!
BAA-NG
HEY !!
TOUCH THAT PHONE AGAIN, AND I'M REALLY GONNA KILL YOU!!
FFFFFK I'M SORRYYY

.....
I WAS THINKING ABOUT TRYING SOMETHING WITH MY CELLPHONE, BUT I GUESS NOT.
WHOA.
ゴオオオオオ
WHOOOSH
HEY
HOW LONG ARE WE GONNA KEEP CIRCLING AROUND THE HIGHWAY...?
WHY IS HE HIJACKING THIS BUS?
I DON'T KNOW WHAT CULT FANATICS ARE THINKING.
THEY PROBABLY JUST WANTED A WAY TO ATTRACT ATTENTION TO THEMSELVES.
REALLY?


IF THEY JUST WANTED ATTENTION, I'M NOT SURE THEY WOULD DO SOMETHING THIS ROUNDABOUT
THIS CULT MADE HEADLINES WITH THAT SERIAL KILLING A FEW YEARS BACK.
NOPE
DOES THAT RING A BELL?
THERE MUST BE SOME IMPORTANT MEANING TO HAVING HOSTAGES
THE PASSENGERS ARE BEING HELD AS HOSTAGES RIGHT?
OHHH
I WAS EXPECTING YOU TO HANDLE THE REST.
ALL I KNOW IS THAT TAKESHI ABE IS PLANNING TO HIJACK THIS BUS.
I WONDER WHAT THAT MEANS? MAYBE HE'S TRYING TO GET TO A SPECIFIC PLACE AT A SPECIFIC TIME.
I REMEMBER HE WAS TELLING THE DRIVER TO KEEP GOING AT 60KM/H, TOO.
HEY!! CONCENTRATE ON STUFF THAT MIGHT ACTUALLY HELP US GET OUT OF HERE!!
THE HIJACKER'S BEEN CHECKING THE TIME A LOT, HASN'T HE
HEY
ゴォォォ

THE BUS COMPANY CALLED IN. THEY MUST'VE NOTICED WE WEREN'T ON THE ROUTE ANYMORE
NOW THE POLICE ARE HERE
WHOA
RATTLE
ガラ
PULL OVER IMMEDIATELY !!
PULL OVER, EXPRESS BUS!!
GEEEEK
GET IN THE WAY, AND I'LL KILL THE PASSEN-GERS!!
HEY!! DON'T YOU DARE TRY TO STOP THIS BUS!!

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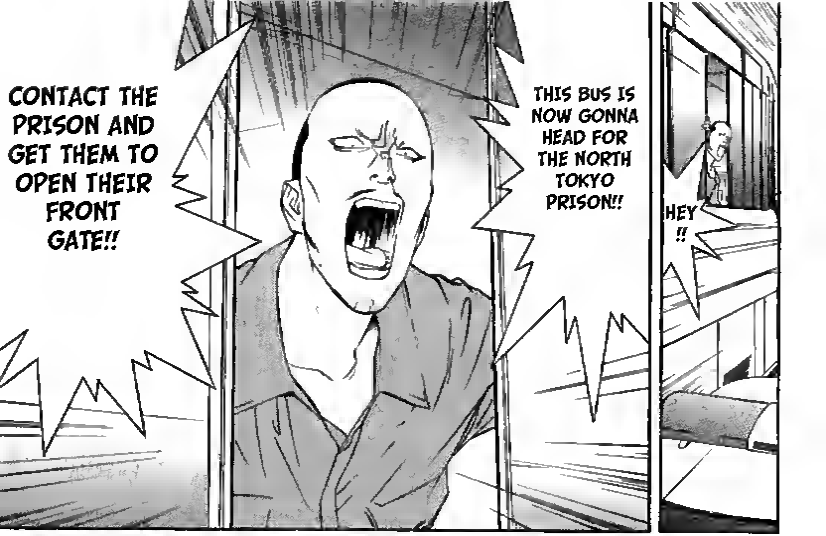
オ
BREAKING NEWS! AN EXPRESS BUS HEADING FROM IKEBUKURO TO KANAZAWA HAS BEEN HIJACKED BY A MAN WITH A HANDGUN!
IT IS CURRENTLY RUNNING THROUGH THE INNER CIRCLE OF THE METROPOLITAN HIGHWAY AT APPROXIMATELY 60KM/H.

THERE ARE 41 HOSTAGES INCLUDING THE DRIVER...
NO INJURIES HAVE BEEN REPORTED THUS FAR.
THIS IS GETTING PRETTY SERIOUS.
YOU BE A BIT MORE SERI-OUS, WILL YOU!

WHAT DOES THE HIJACKER WANT?
ゴォ
IS IT MO-NEY?
OR DOES HE HAVE SOME OTHER ULTERIOR MOTIVE?
HEY
HEAD FOR THE NORTH TOKYO PRISON
OKAY


CONTACT THE PRISON AND GET THEM TO OPEN THEIR FRONT GATE!!
THIS BUS IS NOW GONNA HEAD FOR THE NORTH TOKYO PRISON!!
HEY !!

AHHHHH !!
IF THE GATE ISN'T OPEN BY THE TIME WE GET THERE, ALL THE PASSENGERS ARE DEAD!!

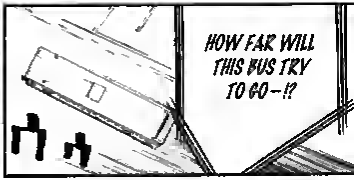
ゴオオオ
IT APPEARS AS THOUGH THE HIJACKER IS ATTEMPTING TO ENTER THE NORTH TOKYO PRISON ON THE BUS WITH THE HOSTAGES ON BOARD!!
HE'S DEMANDING THAT THE FRONT GATE TO THE NORTH TOKYO PRISON BE OPENED!!
THE HIJACKER HAS FINALLY MADE A DEMAND!!

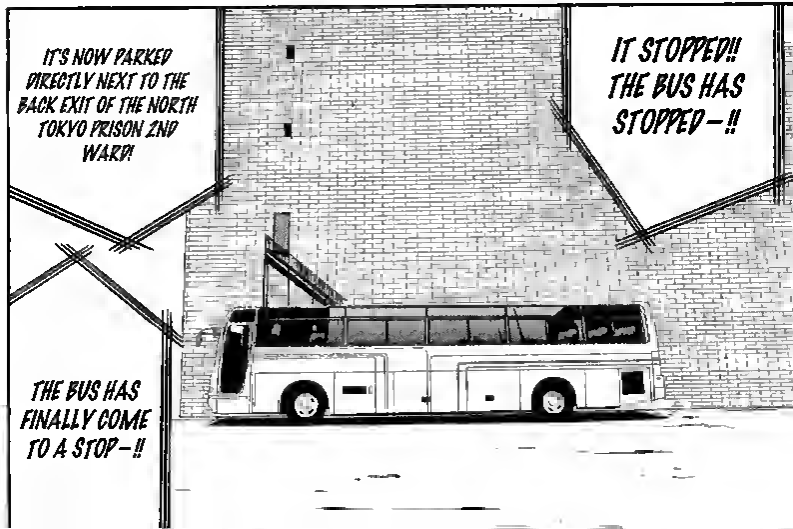
NORTH TOKYO PRISON?
ISN'T THAT THE PLACE WHERE THE GALALAZALA CULT MEMBERS WHO GOT ARRESTED OVER THE SERIAL MURDER CASE ARE BEING INCARCERATED?
HUH?
THEN ABE'S OBJECTIVE IS TO FREE THE CULT LEADER AND FOLLOWERS?
SEEMS LIKE IT
ゴオオオオ
A HALF HOUR HAS PASSED SINCE THE HIJACKER MADE HIS DEMAND—!
THE BUS IS DRAWING CLOSER TO THE NORTH TOKYO PRISON!
WE'VE JUST RECEIVED AN UPDATE!! THE NORTH TOKYO PRISON HAS OPENED ITS FRONT GATE!!
AND INFORMATION ABOUT THE HIJACKER IS COMING IN!! THE HIJACKER IS GALALAZALA CULT MEMBER TAKESHI ABE, AGE 23!!
HIS AIM IS MOST LIKELY—
TO FREE THE LEADER AND OTHER HIGH-RANKING MEMBERS OF THE GALALAZALA CULT WHO ARE CURRENTLY BEING INCARCERATED IN THE NORTH TOKYO PRISON—!
HMM..
THAT'S WEIRD
?

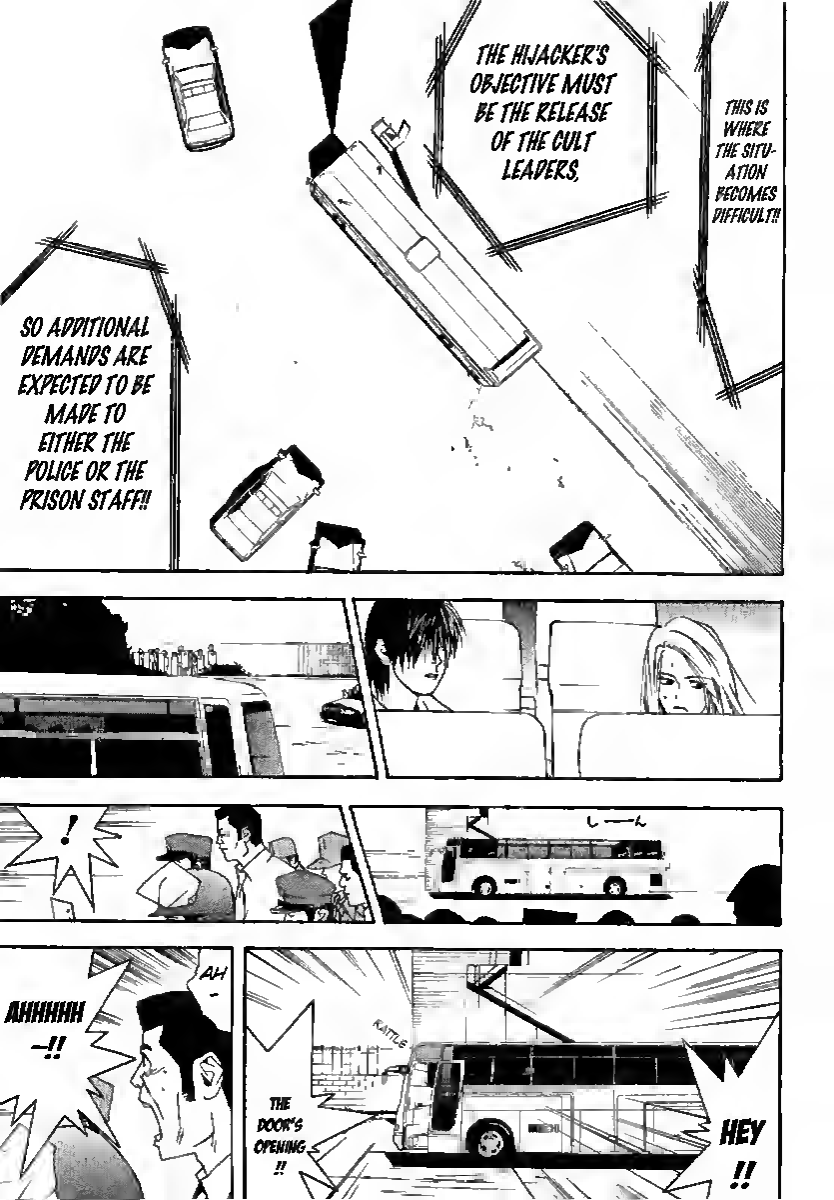
HOW COME HE'S JUST ASKING TO GET INSIDE THE PRISON GATES?
IF HIS OBJECTIVE WAS TO FREE THE CULT LEADER, HIS DEMAND SHOULD'VE BEEN "FREE THE LEADER, OR THE HOSTAGES DIE," RIGHT?
WHICH COULD MEAN
BUT A SIMPLE DEMAND LIKE "LET ME INTO THE PRISON" WENT THROUGH PRETTY EASILY, DIDN'T IT?
THEY WOULD TRY AND DELAY THINGS AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE.
THE POLICE WOULDN'T ACCEPT A DEMAND LIKE THAT RIGHT OFF THE BAT.
WELL—
.....?
HE HAS SOME SORT OF SECRET PLAN THAT WOULD ALLOW HIM TO COMPLETE HIS OBJECTIVE JUST BY GETTING THE BUS INSIDE OF THE PRISON.
THE FRONT GATE IS OPEN, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE HIJACKER'S DEMANDS!
VRRR
THE BUS IS NOW APPROACHING THE NORTH TOKYO PRISON!

THE BUS HAS ENTERED THE PRISON WALLS, FOLLOWED BY A PACK OF POLICE CARS—!!
OHH—! THE BUS HAS JUST NOW PASSED THROUGH THE GATE!!

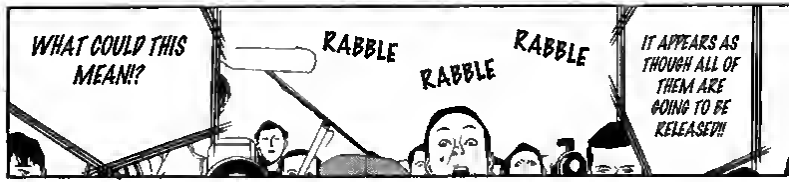
AHH!!
SCREECH!


HOW FAR WILL THIS BUS TRY TO GO—!?


IT'S NOW PARKED DIRECTLY NEXT TO THE BACK EXIT OF THE NORTH TOKYO PRISON 2ND WARD!
IT STOPPED!! THE BUS HAS STOPPED—!!
THE BUS HAS FINALLY COME TO A STOP—!!


THE HIJACKER'S OBJECTIVE MUST BE THE RELEASE OF THE CULT LEADERS.
THIS IS WHERE THE SITUATION BECOMES DIFFICULT!!
SO ADDITIONAL DEMANDS ARE EXPECTED TO BE MADE TO EITHER THE POLICE OR THE PRISON STAFF!!
!
しーん
AHHHHHH —!!
AH —
KATTLE
THE DOOR'S OPENING !!
HEY !!

オオオ
ONE BY ONE, THE PASSENGERS ARE FILING OFF THE BUS!!
オォ
オォ
THE HOSTAGES ARE BEING RELEASED!!


WHAT COULD THIS MEAN!?
RABBLE
RABBLE
RABBLE
IT APPEARS AS THOUGH ALL OF THEM ARE GOING TO BE RELEASED!!

OH!! THE LAST ONE OUT IS -
TH-THE HIJACKER !!

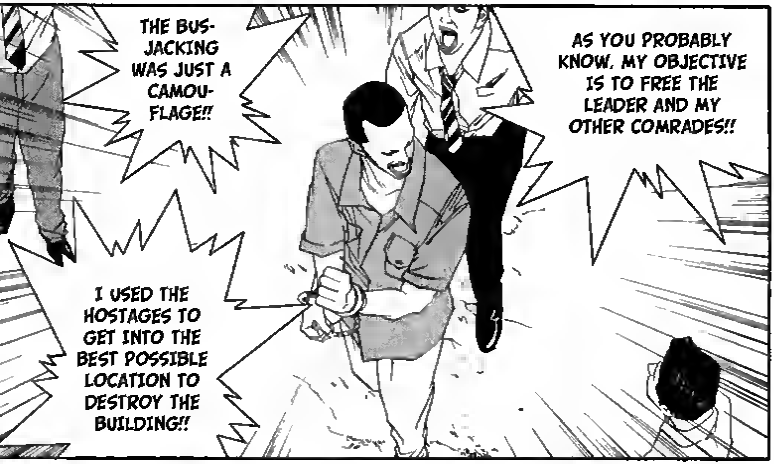
THE HIJACKER HAS BEEN SURROUNDED AND ARRESTED BY THE POLICE OFFICERS —!!
HE'S SURRENDERING!!
WHAT AN UNEXPECTED OUTCOME!!
THE HIJACKER WAS CONSTANTLY CHECKING HIS WATCH, AND IT SEEMED LIKE HE JUST RELEASED US WHEN THE TIME CAME
WHAT —!?
DID ONE OF THE PASSENGERS PERSUADE HIM TO DO SO!?
WHY DID THE HIJACKER SUDDENLY RELEASE THE HOSTAGES!?
NO, NOBODY DID...
ARE YOU OKAY? DO YOU HAVE ANY INJURIES?
N NO, I DON'T THINK ANY OF THE PASSENGERS HAVE BEEN HURT AT ALL
IN THE END NOT A SINGLE DEMAND WAS MADE AFTER THE BUS ENTERED THE PRISON WALLS —!!
THIS ISN'T OVER YET !!
HEY !!
!!
WHAT AN UNEXPECTED CONCLUSION!! IT'S SAFE TO SAY THAT THIS BUS-JACKING CASE HAS NOW COME TO AN END!!
YES... IT SEEMED THAT WAY... WE'RE PRETTY SURPRISED OURSELVES.
...SO HE WAS PLANNING ON RELEASING THE HOSTAGES AFTER A CERTAIN PERIOD OF TIME HAD PASSED!?

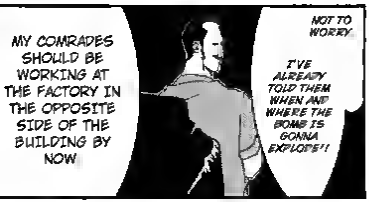
THAT BUS PARKED RIGHT NEXT TO THE BUILDING-
IT'S GOT A TIME BOMB PLANTED NEAR THE FUEL TANK!!
!!

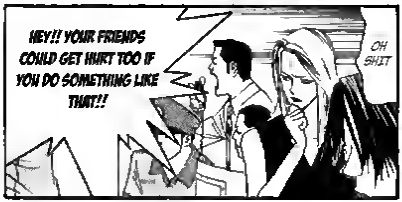
IT'S A PRETTY POWERFUL ONE.
THIS IS A STURDY BUILDING, BUT THAT BOMB SHOULD BE ABLE TAKE OUT ABOUT A QUARTER OF IT.

!!
!!
HALF OF THE BUILDING IS GONNA BE BLASTED OPEN,
AND ALL THE EMERGENCY EXITS ARE GONNA OPEN UP FOR EVACUATION
-MEANING

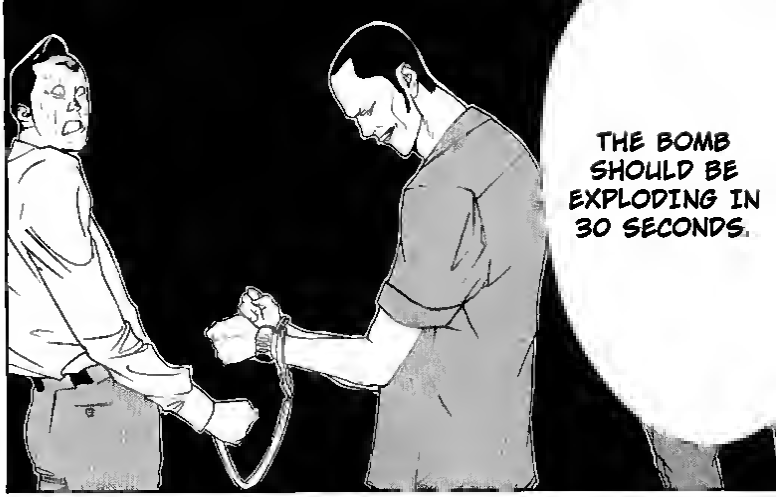
EVERY SINGLE PRISONER IN THERE IS GONNA HAVE AN EASY TIME ESCAPING.


THE BUS-JACKING WAS JUST A CAMOU-FLAGE!!
AS YOU PROBABLY KNOW, MY OBJECTIVE IS TO FREE THE LEADER AND MY OTHER COMRADES!!
I USED THE HOSTAGES TO GET INTO THE BEST POSSIBLE LOCATION TO DESTROY THE BUILDING!!

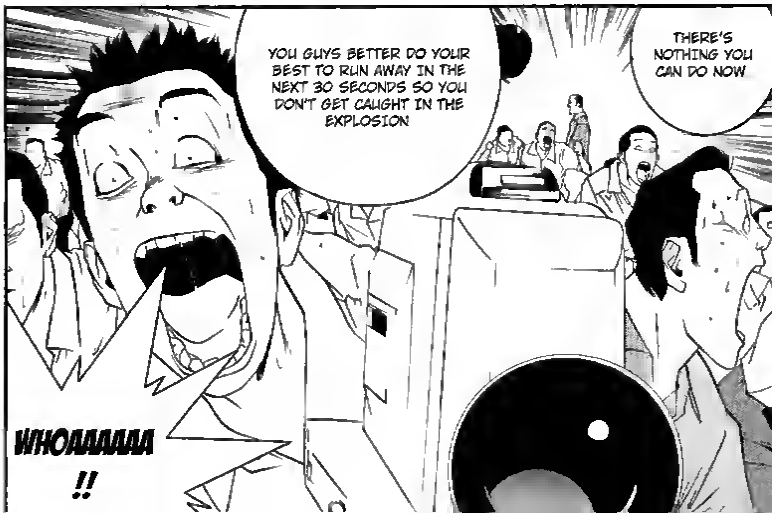

MY COMRADES SHOULD BE WORKING AT THE FACTORY IN THE OPPOSITE SIDE OF THE BUILDING BY NOW
NOT TO WORRY.
I'VE ALREADY TOLD THEM WHEN AND WHERE THE BOMB IS GONNA EXPLODE!!


HEY!! YOUR FRIENDS COULD GET HURT TOO IF YOU DO SOMETHING LIKE THAT!!
OH SHIT

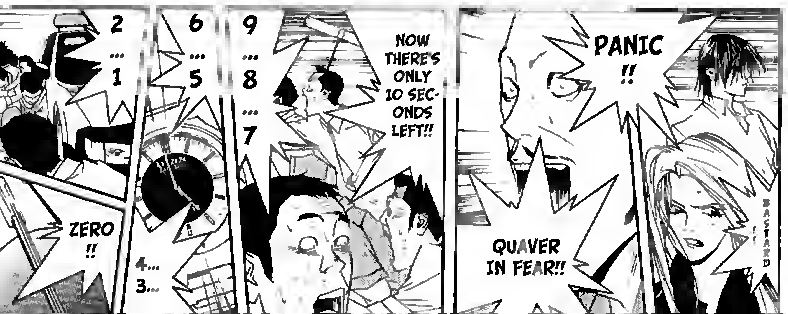
HEH-HEH-HEH IT'S TOO LATE
JUST GET THE BOMB SQUAD OUT HERE IMMEDIATELY!!
HEY !!
...YOU'RE SAYING YOU DON'T CARE HOW MANY OF THE PRISONERS DIE AS LONG AS THEY AREN'T YOUR FRIENDS!?
DAMN IT... YOU CALCU-LATED ALL THAT ...!?

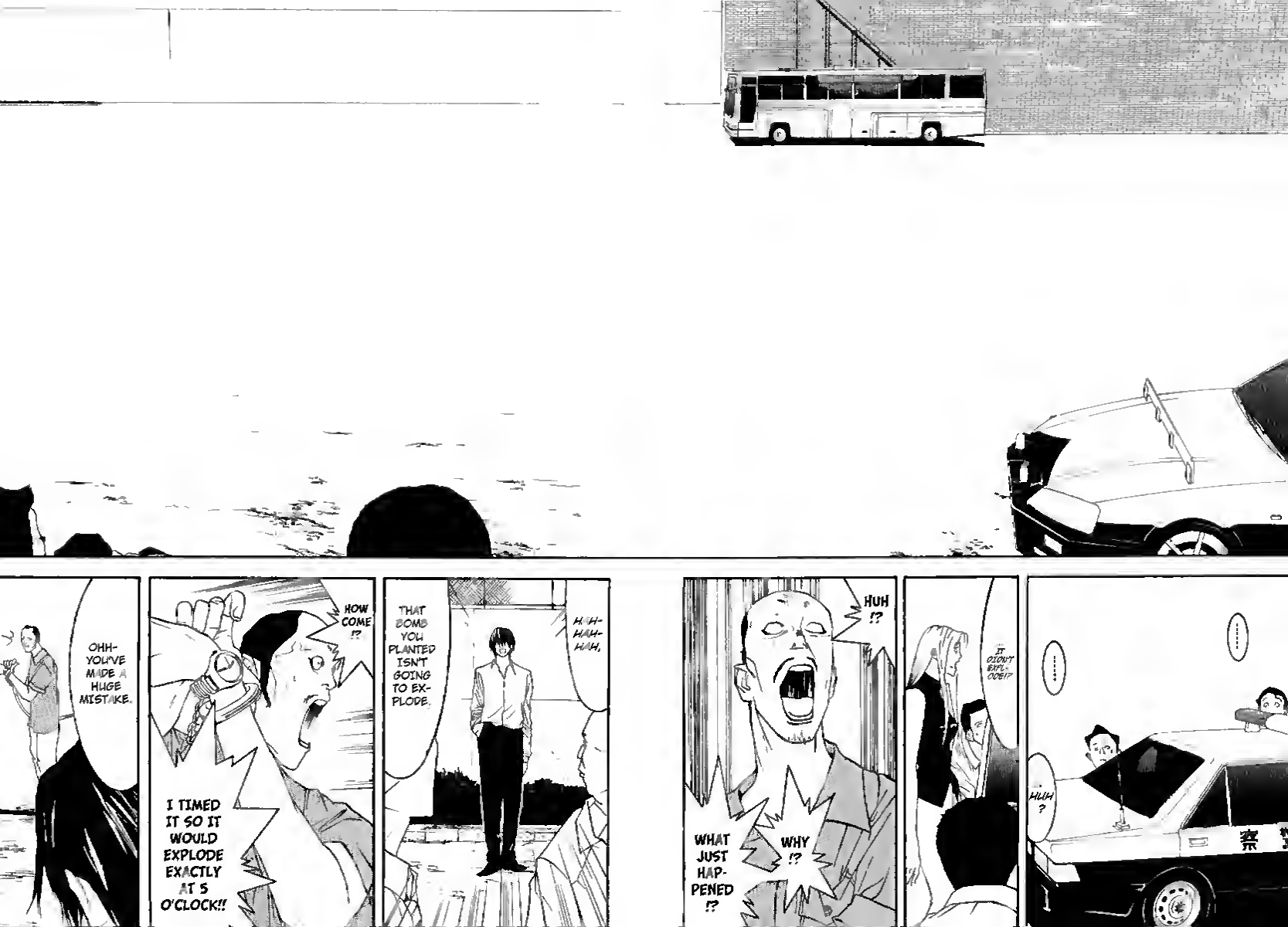

THE BOMB SHOULD BE EXPLODING IN 30 SECONDS.

WHAAAAAAAT !?

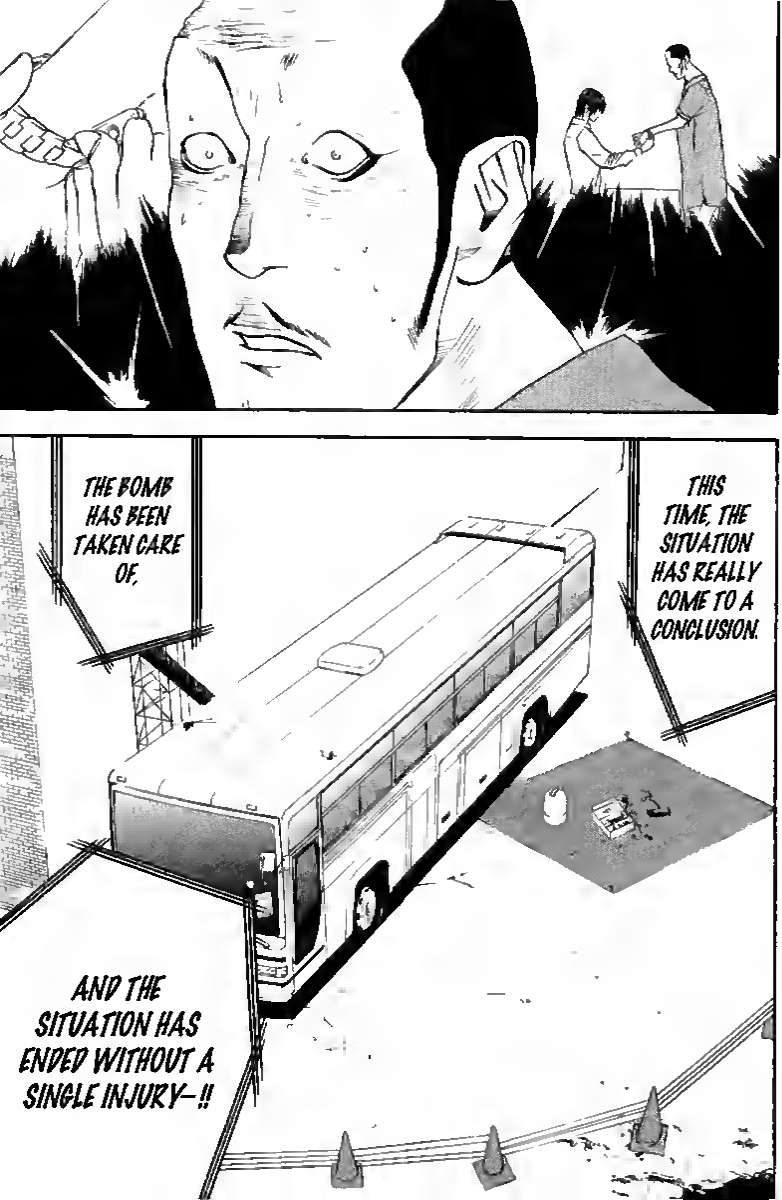

YOU GUYS BETTER DO YOUR BEST TO RUN AWAY IN THE NEXT 30 SECONDS SO YOU DON'T GET CAUGHT IN THE EXPLOSION
THERE'S NOTHING YOU CAN DO NOW
WHOAAAAAA !!

WHOA!!
RUN!!
GET AWAY FROM THE BUS!!
WHOAAAAA —!!
HAH-HAH-HAH!!


2 ... 1
ZERO !!
6 ... 5
4... 3...
9 ... 8 ... 7
NOW THERE'S ONLY 10 SECONDS LEFT!!
PANIC !!
QUAVER IN FEAR!!
BASTARD


OHH- YOU'VE MADE A HUGE MISTAKE.
HOW COME !?
I TIMED IT SO IT WOULD EXPLODE EXACTLY AT 5 O'CLOCK!!
THAT BOMB YOU PLANTED ISN'T GOING TO EX- PLODE.
H, H- HAH- HAH,
HUH !?
WHAT JUST HAP- PENED !?
WHY !?
IT DIDN'T EXPLO- DE!?
HUH ?

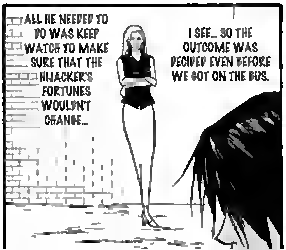
IT'S 4:42.
UHH
WHAT TIME IS IT RIGHT NOW, OFFICER?
!?
IT'S STILL 20 MINUTES BEFORE 5 O'CLOCK.
HAH-HAH-HAH
NO WONDER IT HASN'T EXPLODED
WHAT !?
WH
HEH-HEH. REMEMBER HOW YOU CAME TO GET YOUR PALM READ THIS MORNING?
I CHECKED IT THIS MORNING!!
WHY IS MY WATCH ...!?
WHY ..!?
I SECRETLY SET YOUR WATCH 20 MINUTES EARLY.

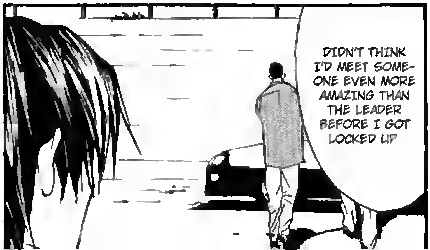

THE BOMB HAS BEEN TAKEN CARE OF,
THIS TIME, THE SITUATION HAS REALLY COME TO A CONCLUSION.
AND THE SITUATION HAS ENDED WITHOUT A SINGLE INJURY-!!

...OH
CAN I ASK YOU ONE THING BEFORE I GO?
!
WHY'D YOU SET MY WATCH EARLY?
I DON'T GET IT.
IT'S LIKE YOU...
YOU KNEW I HAD A BOMB FROM THE START
.....
I DID KNOW.
THE INSTANT I READ YOUR PALM.
YOUR CONNECTION TO THE GALA-LAZALA CULT,
HIJACK THE BUS,
AND SET THE TIME BOMB TO EXPLODE AT 5 O'CLOCK... ALL OF IT.
YOUR PLAN TO BOMB THE NORTH TOKYO PRISON,

THAT,
IS THE POWER OF THE THREE PHASE DIVINATION.

WOW, THAT'S QUITE SOMETHING...
HAH HAH
HAH


ALL HE NEEDED TO DO WAS KEEP WATCH TO MAKE SURE THAT THE HIJACKER'S FORTUNES WOULDN'T CHANGE...
I SEE... SO THE OUTCOME WAS DECIDED EVEN BEFORE WE GOT ON THE BUS.

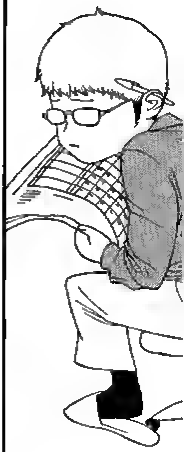

DIDN'T THINK I'D MEET SOMEONE EVEN MORE AMAZING THAN THE LEADER BEFORE I GOT LOCKED UP!

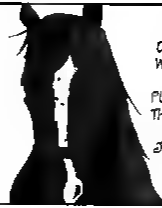
TEEEE PEESE "THE PEEEIDEEE EIVINETION" (2) (END)

THE TALE OF SHINOBU KAITARI'S PET DOG

I'M A HUGE HORSE-RACING FAN, SO I NAMED HER *VEGA* AFTER MY FAVORITE RACEHORSE.

A CHANCE HAPPENING EARLIER THIS YEAR LED ME TO GET A PET DOG, A FEMALE MINIATURE DACHSHUND.





[VEGA] WAS THE DOUBLE-CROWN WINNING RACEHORSE THAT PLACED FIRST IN THE OKA SHO (GI) AND THE JAPANESE OAKS (GI) IN 1998.

SHE ALSO BECAME A SUCCESSFUL MARE AFTER BEING RETIRED. HER FIRST SON, ADMIRE VEGA, IMMEDIATELY BECAME A DERBY RACEHORSE, AND SHE LATER BIRTHED ADMIRE BOSS AND ADMIRE DON, MAKING HER THE PROUD MOTHER OF THREE PRIZEWINNING STALLIONS.

[HOKUTO VEGA] THIS RACEHORSE DASHED VEGA'S HOPES OF WINNING THE JAPANESE TRIPLE CROWN BY PLACING FIRST IN THE QUEEN ELIZABETH II COMMEMORATIVE CUP IN 1998.

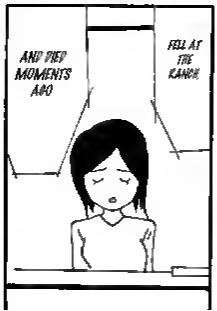
SHE WAS UNSUCCESSFUL IN LATER RACES, BUT TOOK A TURN FOR THE BETTER AFTER BECOMING A DIRT SURFACE SPECIALIST. SHE WON 10 CONSECUTIVE HIGH-REGARDED DIRT SURFACE RACES, GAINING THE MONIKER "QUEEN OF THE SAND."

SHE WAS INVITED TO THE DUBAI WORLD CUP TO RUN HER RETIREMENT RACE, BUT FELL MIDWAY THROUGH THE RACE AND DIED.

VEGA

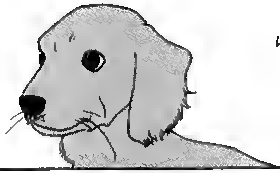
VEGA

VEGA



DOUBLE CROWN RACEHORSE VEGA, WHO WAS IN RETIREMENT AT NORTHERN FARM IN HAYAKITA.
THE WAY SHE DIED WAS JUST SO SAD. I DIDN'T WANT THAT HAPPENING TO THE DOG SO I...

AS A RESULT OF PAINSTAKING HARD WORK AND TRAINING, VEGA HAS LEARNED "SIT," "BOW," AND "WAIT."



DISCIPLINE IS OF THE UTMOST IMPORTANCE WHEN RAISING A DOG

SIT

SPLA—T

FLAP FLAP

BOW

SPLA—T

FLAP FLAP

WAIT

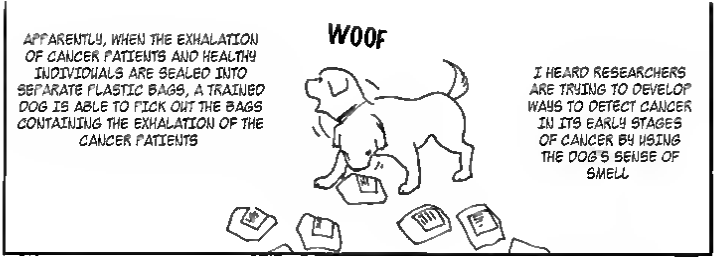
BLEH—

FLAP FLAP

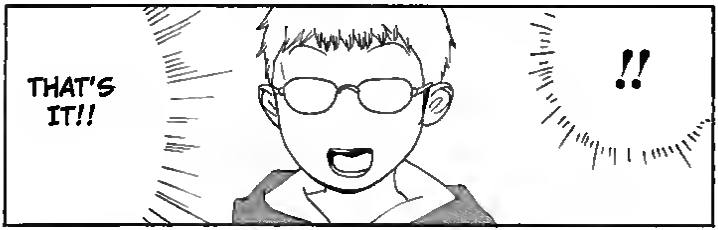
YOU DIDN'T TRAIN HER PROPERLY!!

PROBABLY 'CAUSE HER LEGS ARE SO SHORT—

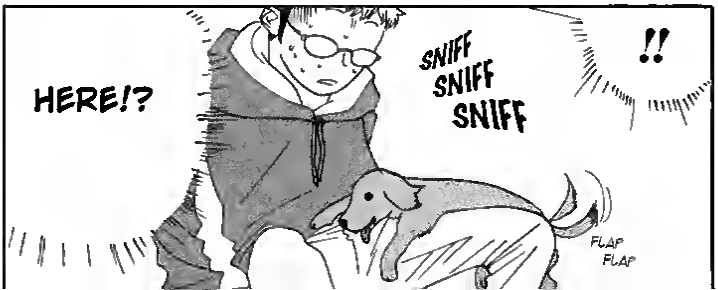
SHE'S VERY UNIQUE—

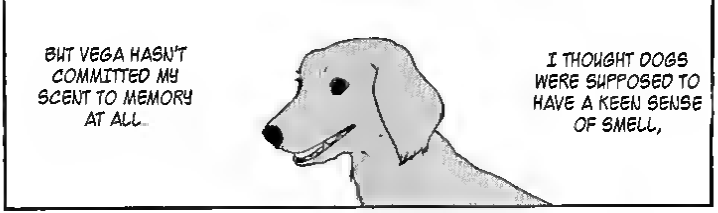

APPARENTLY, WHEN THE EXHALATION OF CANCER PATIENTS AND HEALTHY INDIVIDUALS ARE SEALED INTO SEPARATE PLASTIC BAGS, A TRAINED DOG IS ABLE TO PICK OUT THE BAGS CONTAINING THE EXHALATION OF THE CANCER PATIENTS
WOOF
I HEARD RESEARCHERS ARE TRYING TO DEVELOP WAYS TO DETECT CANCER IN ITS EARLY STAGES OF CANCER BY USING THE DOG'S SENSE OF SMELL

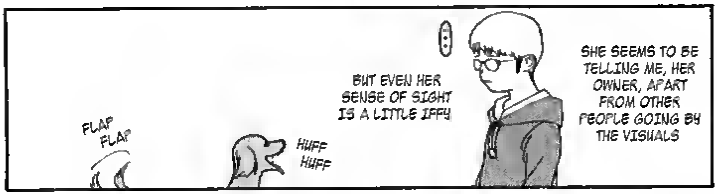
AND IT TURNED OUT TO BE SKIN CANCER!
MY PET DOG JUST WOULDN'T STOP SNIFFING THE MOLE ON MY LEG, SO I HAD IT CHECKED OUT
ACCORDING TO THE PERSON WHO DISCOVERED THIS PHENOMENON—

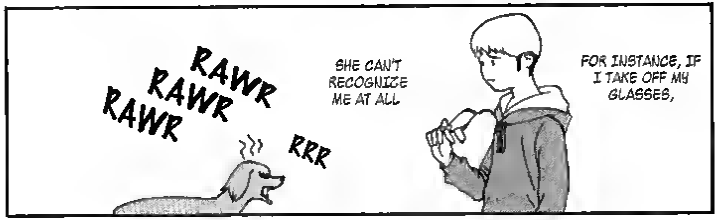

THAT'S IT!!
!!

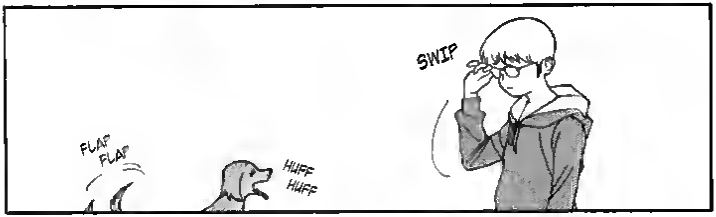
ARE THERE ANY CANCEROUS CELLS ON MY BODY!?
VEGA!!
SMELL ME!!
FLAP FLAP
HUFF HUFF

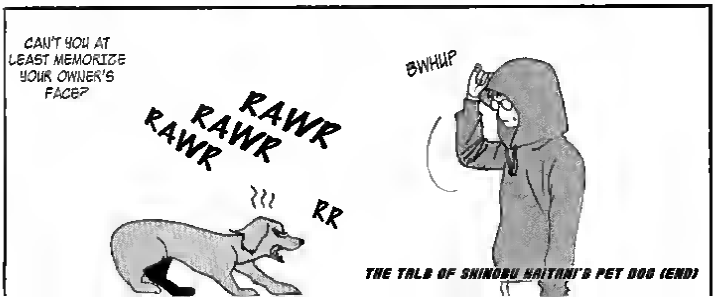

HERE!?
SNIFF SNIFF SNIFF
!!
FLAP FLAP


BUT VEGA HASN'T COMMITTED MY SCENT TO MEMORY AT ALL...
I THOUGHT DOGS WERE SUPPOSED TO HAVE A KEEN SENSE OF SMELL,


FLAP FLAP
HUFF HUFF
BUT EVEN HER SENSE OF SIGHT IS A LITTLE IFFY
SHE SEEMS TO BE TELLING ME, HER OWNER, APART FROM OTHER PEOPLE GOING BY THE VISUALS


RAWR RAWR RAWR
RRR
SHE CAN'T RECOGNIZE ME AT ALL
FOR INSTANCE, IF I TAKE OFF MY GLASSES,


SNIP
FLAP FLAP
HUFF HUFF


CAN'T YOU AT LEAST MEMORIZE YOUR OWNER'S FACE?
RAWR RAWR RAWR
RR
BWHIP
THE TALE OF SHINOBU KAITANI'S PET DOG (END)

WHEN I WAS LITTLE, I READ IN A BOOK...

THAT EVERY GENDERED SPECIES IS NATURALLY BORN WITH THE ABILITY TO "SENSE" A PARTNER THAT IS BEST SUITED TO THEM.

SUPPOSEDLY, IT'S CAUSED BY THE ATTRACTION OF THE DNA, WANTING TO CREATE THE BEST POSSIBLE COMBINATION OF GENES FOR THE NEXT GENERATION.

HUMANS ARE NO EXCEPTION. WE ALSO HAVE THIS ABILITY.

AND THE INSTANT IT COMES INTO PLAY IS CALLED –

LOVE... AT FIRST SIGHT.

...AND ACCORDING TO THAT LEGEND, HISASHI'S DESTINED TO BE WITH HIS CURRENT GIRLFRIEND, THIS LADY RIGHT HERE.

WELL HE-HE-H

WOW!

SHE'S CUTE

THAT'S SUCH AN UNBELIEVABLY POOR MATCH

THIS PHOTO TOTALLY LOWERS THE CREDIBILITY OF THAT LEGEND

WHAT!? HOW COME–

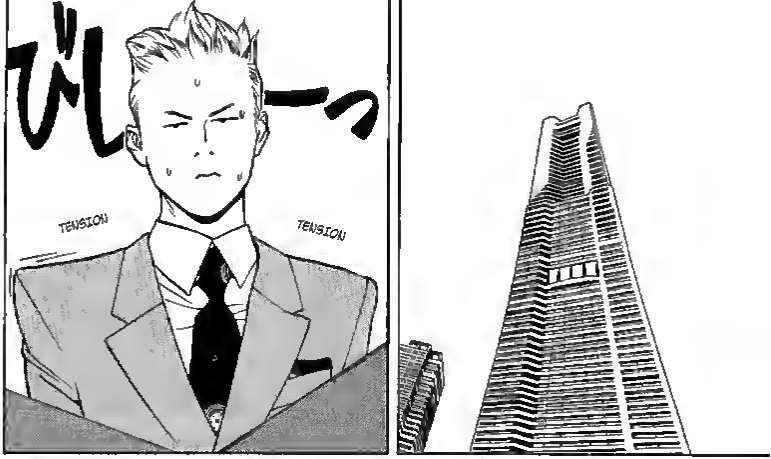
YE... MY INSTINCT TOLD ME THAT SHE... MISS HARUKA WAS THE ONE.

IT TRULY WAS LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT.

BUT IF YOU ASK ME IF I THINK I'M REALLY DESTINED TO BE WITH MISS HARUKA...

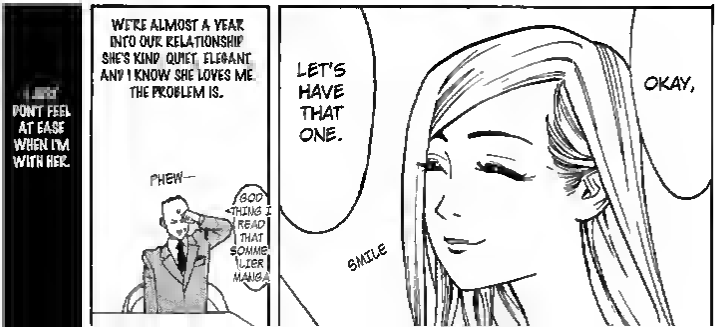
THESE DAYS, I'M STARTING TO LOSE CONFIDENCE.

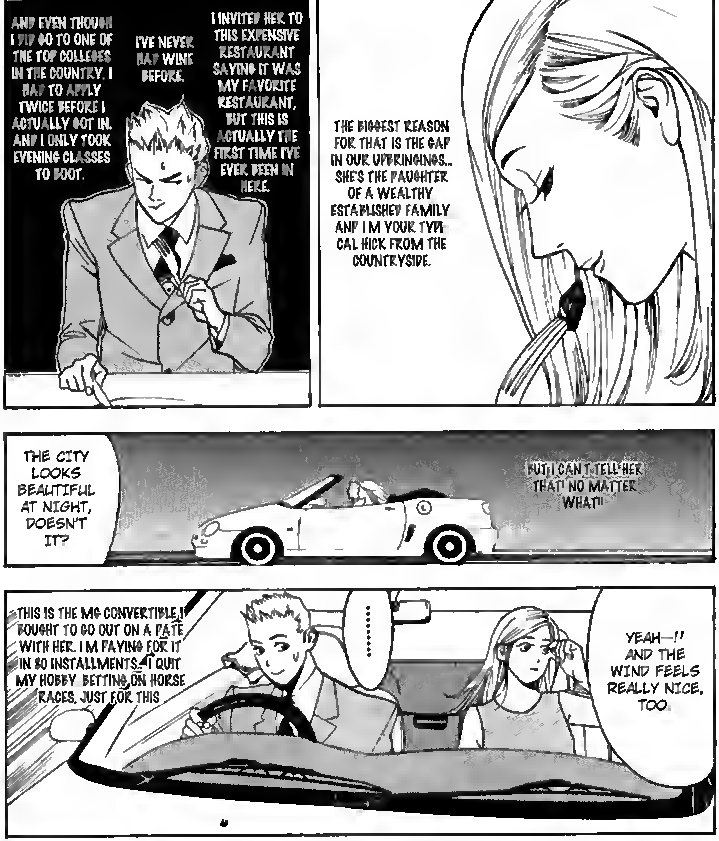
@ LOVERS

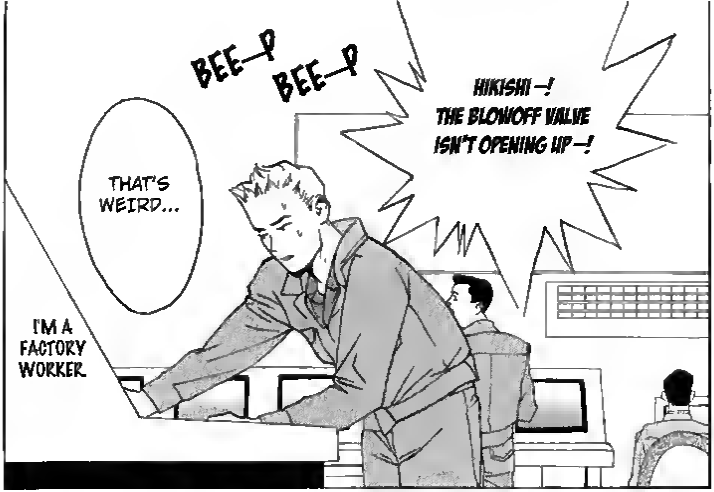

TENSION
TENSION

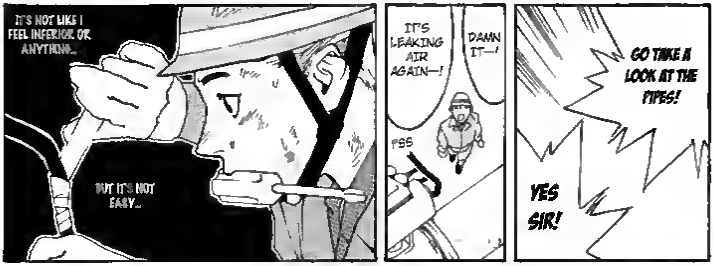
LET'S SEE...
W-WINE?
WHICH WINE WILL YOU HAVE, SIR?

IT'S A REALLY NICE WINE.
HOW ABOUT CALON-SEGUR?
OH!! I'VE HEARD OF THIS ONE BEFORE!


I DON'T FEEL AT EASE WHEN I'M WITH HER.
WE'RE ALMOST A YEAR INTO OUR RELATIONSHIP. SHE'S KIND, QUIET, ELEGANT... AND I KNOW SHE LOVES ME. THE PROBLEM IS...
PHEW—
GOD THING I READ THAT SOMMELIER MANGA
LET'S HAVE THAT ONE.
SMILE
OKAY,


AND EVEN THOUGH I DID GO TO ONE OF THE TOP COLLEGES IN THE COUNTRY, I HAD TO APPLY TWICE BEFORE I ACTUALLY GOT IN. AND I ONLY TOOK EVENING CLASSES TO BOOT.
I'VE NEVER HAD WINE BEFORE.
I INVITED HER TO THIS EXPENSIVE RESTAURANT SAYING IT WAS MY FAVORITE RESTAURANT, BUT THIS IS ACTUALLY THE FIRST TIME I'VE EVER BEEN IN HERE.
THE BIGGEST REASON FOR THAT IS THE GAP IN OUR UPBRINGINGS... SHE'S THE DAUGHTER OF A WEALTHY ESTABLISHED FAMILY AND I'M YOUR TYPICAL HICK FROM THE COUNTRYSIDE.
THE CITY LOOKS BEAUTIFUL AT NIGHT, DOESN'T IT?
BUT I CAN'T TELL HER THAT! NO MATTER WHAT!!
THIS IS THE MG CONVERTIBLE I BOUGHT TO GO OUT ON A DATE WITH HER. I'M PAYING FOR IT IN 60 INSTALLMENTS. I QUIT MY HOBBY BETTING ON HORSE RACES, JUST FOR THIS.
.....
YEAH—!! AND THE WIND FEELS REALLY NICE, TOO.
I DO WORK WITH COMPUTERS, BUT ACTUALLY...
I'VE TOLD HER I WORK AT A COMPUTER COMPANY.
R-REALLY?
WOW... THAT HIGH-TECH STUFF REALLY SOUNDS HARD.
OUR SERVER WENT DOWN THE OTHER DAY AND I HAD TO STAY UP ALL NIGHT TRYING TO RECOVER THE DATA.
MM... YEAH.
HOW'S WORK? ARE YOU BUSY?
WELL ?

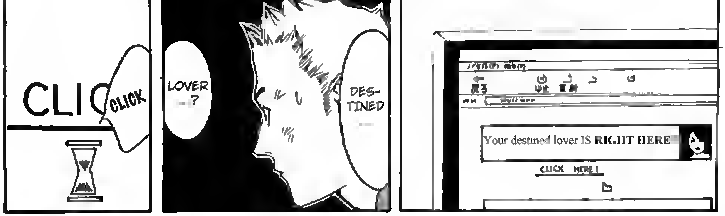


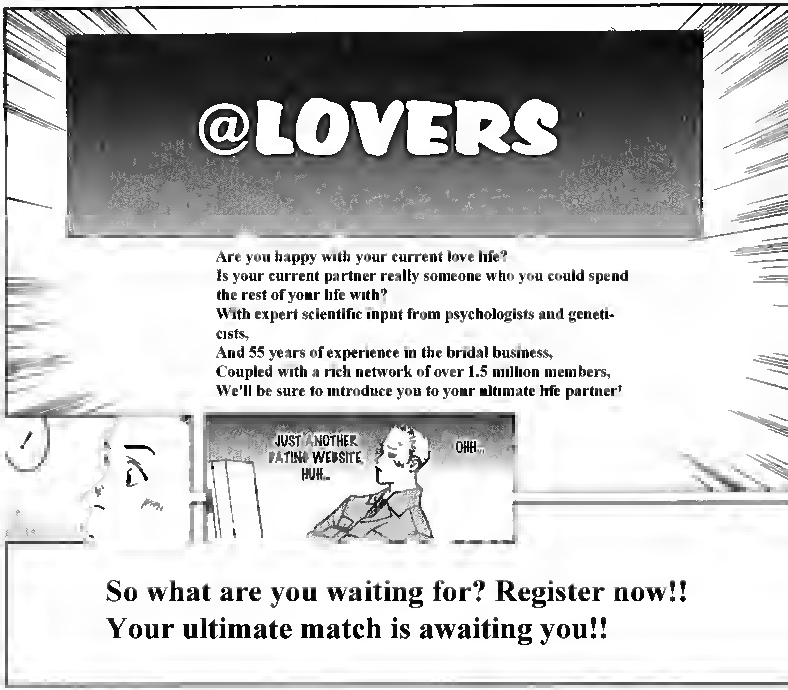

IT'S NOT LIKE I FEEL INFERIOR OR ANYTHING...
BUT IT'S NOT EASY...
IT'S LEAKING AIR AGAIN—!
DAMN IT—!
PSS
GO TAKE A LOOK AT THE PIPES!
YES SIR!

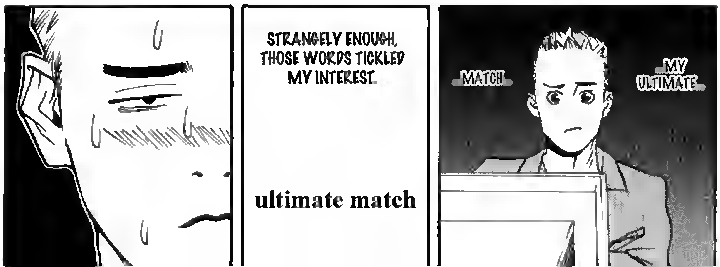
REALLY MEANT TO BE TOGETHER?

ARE MISS HARUKA AND I...

SIGH—


CLICK
CLICK
LOVER...?
DES-TINED
Your destined lover IS RIGHT HERE!
CLICK HERE!


@LOVERS
Are you happy with your current love life?
Is your current partner really someone who you could spend the rest of your life with?
With expert scientific input from psychologists and geneticists,
And 55 years of experience in the bridal business,
Coupled with a rich network of over 1.5 million members,
We'll be sure to introduce you to your ultimate life partner!
JUST ANOTHER DATING WEBSITE, HUH...
OHH...
So what are you waiting for? Register now!!
Your ultimate match is awaiting you!!

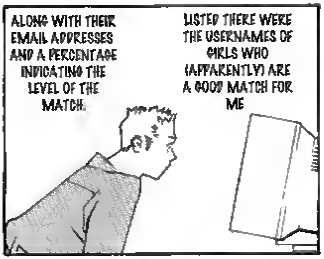

STRANGELY ENOUGH, THOSE WORDS TICKLED MY INTEREST.
ultimate match
MATCH
MY ULTIMATE

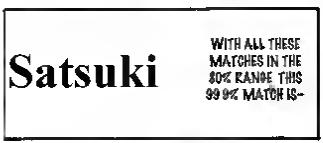
...YEP
HE-H HE-H
WOW
YOU SUCK
WITH A CUTE GIRL-FRIEND LIKE THAT?
PER-VERT
FR-EAK
AND YOU REGIS-TERED!?
WHAT!?
OHHHH
AND USE THAT KNOWLEDGE TO IMPROVE MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MISS HARUKA, OKAY..!
I JUST WANNA GET TO KNOW GIRLS WHO ARE A GOOD MATCH FOR ME-
I-I'VE GOT NOTHING TO BE ASHAMED OF!!
.....
YOU'VE GOT NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT, RIGHT?
BUT I THOUGHT YOU WERE DESTINED TO BE WITH MISS HARUKA
I'VE ALREADY GOT A MESSAGE FROM @LOVERS!!
@Lov
!!
IF I WAS REALLY SATISFIED WITH MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MISS HARUKA, I PROBABLY WOULDN'T HAVE THOUGHT ABOUT REGISTERING IN THE FIRST PLACE-
TRUE..

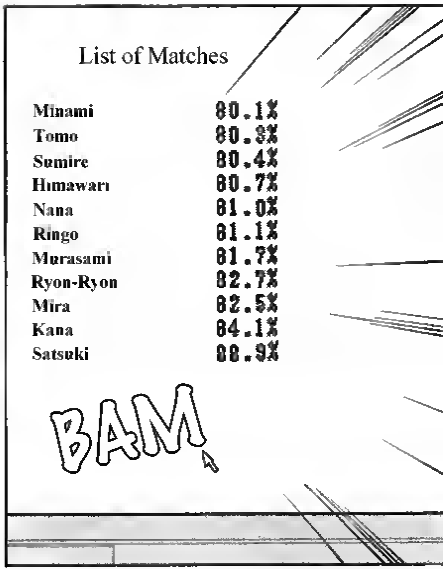
Dear Mr. Ta-Ke,

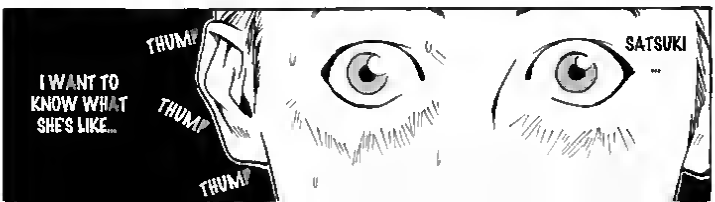
@Lovers has found 11 members with whom you are an 80% match or better

CLICK
IN CASE YOU'RE WONDERING, "TA-KE" WAS THE NAME OF THE PET DOG I USED TO HAVE WHEN I WAS A KID
"TA-KE" IS MY USERNAME, OF COURSE. THIS SITE ALWAYS USES AN ALIAS TO PREVENT LEAKING PRIVATE INFORMATION


ALONG WITH THEIR EMAIL ADDRESSES AND A PERCENTAGE INDICATING THE LEVEL OF THE MATCH.
LISTED THERE WERE THE USERNAMES OF GIRLS WHO (APPARENTLY) ARE A GOOD MATCH FOR ME







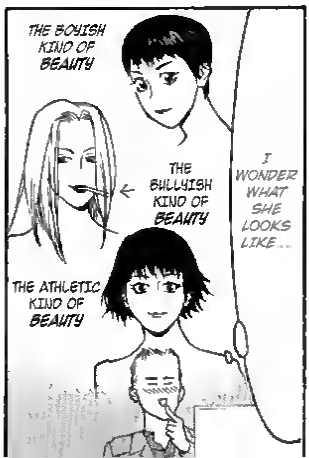
Hey there,

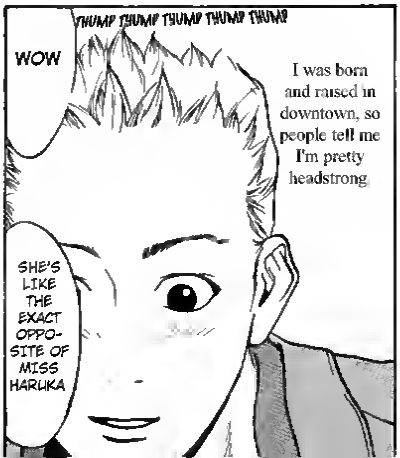
My name is Ta-Ke
I'm a 27 year old working at a paper manufacturing factory in the city
I joined @Lovers because I wanted to know what kind of girl would make a good match for me

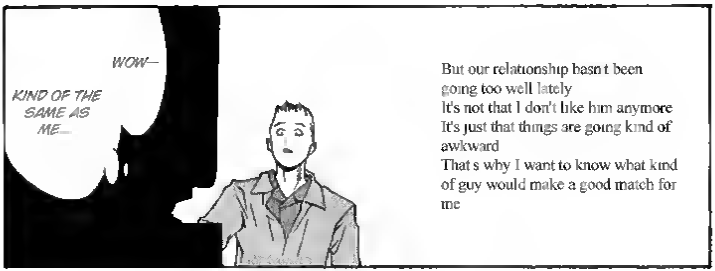
TTYL

Hi nice to meet you!!
This is Satsuki!!
I guess we're the same age.
I'm an office worker
—But I just do some paperwork for my father. It's nothing fancy
He's the owner of a small-town factory.
You seem like a really interesting sort of guy, Mr. Ta-Ke.

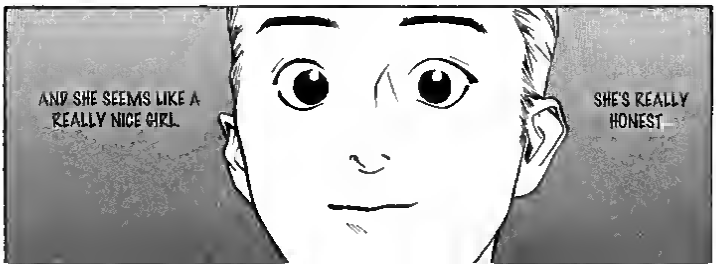
MAYBE IT WAS THE TTYL

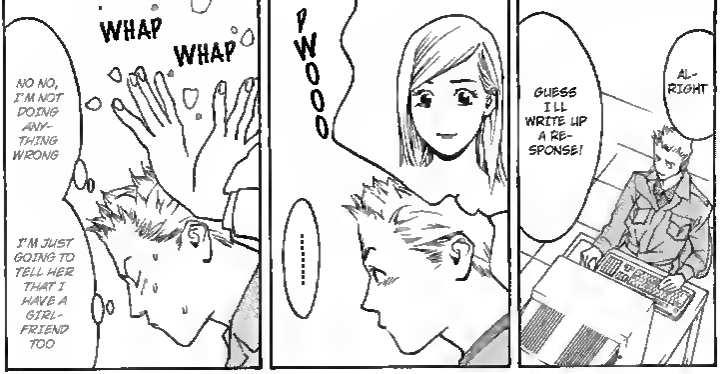


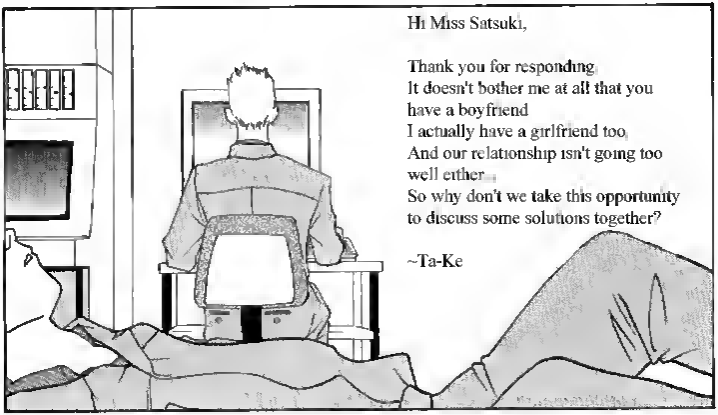

THUMP THUMP THUMP THUMP THUMP
WOW
I was born and raised in downtown, so people tell me I'm pretty headstrong.
SHE'S LIKE THE EXACT OPPO-SITE OF MISS HARUKA

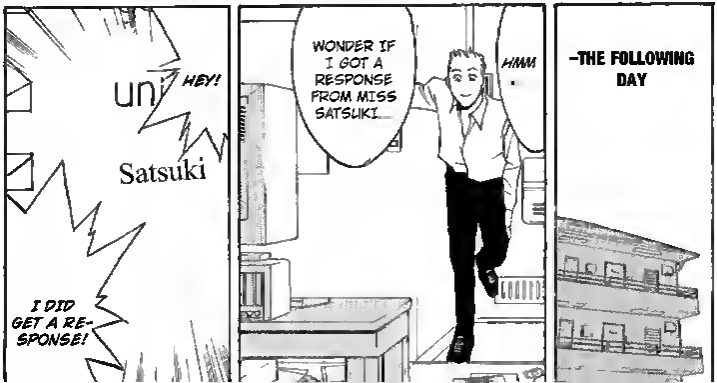

WOW—
KIND OF THE SAME AS ME...
But our relationship hasn't been going too well lately
It's not that I don't like him anymore
It's just that things are going kind of awkward
That's why I want to know what kind of guy would make a good match for me

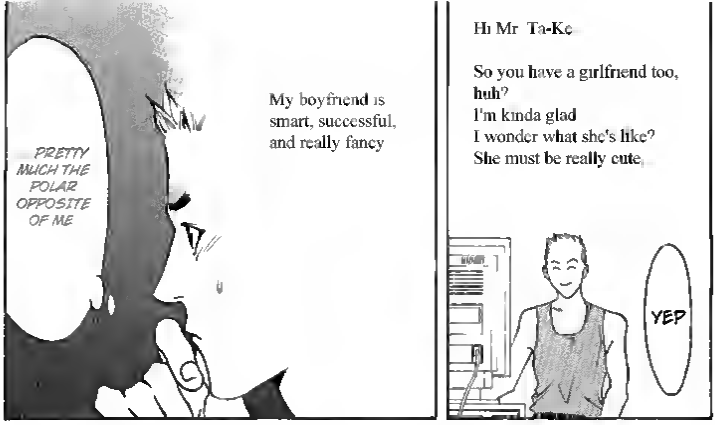
I guess I shouldn't really be doing this stuff since I'm not single...?
I'm sorry if I hurt your feelings.
See ya

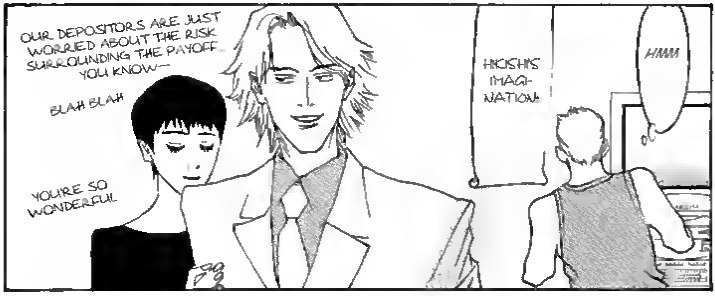


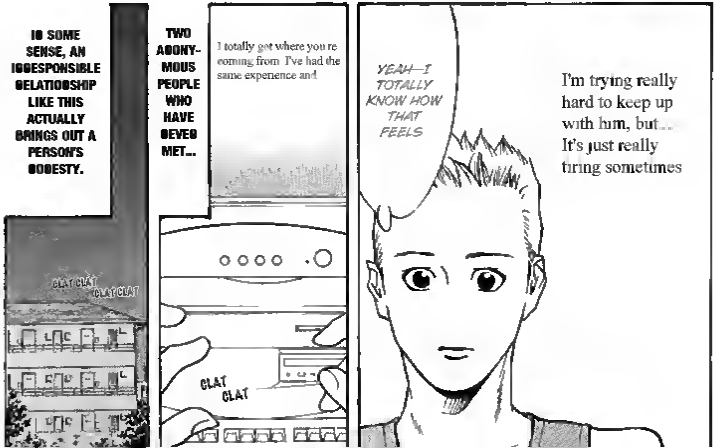

WHAP
WHAP
NO NO, I'M NOT DOING ANY-THING WRONG
I'M JUST GOING TO TELL HER THAT I HAVE A GIRL-FRIEND TOO
P
WOOO
.....
GUESS I'LL WRITE UP A RE-SPONSE!
AL-RIGHT


Hi Miss Satsuki,
Thank you for responding.
It doesn't bother me at all that you have a boyfriend.
I actually have a girlfriend too.
And our relationship isn't going too well either...
So why don't we take this opportunity to discuss some solutions together?
~Ta-Ke


un
HEY!
Satsuki
I DID GET A RE-SPONSE!
WONDER IF I GOT A RESPONSE FROM MISS SATSUKI.....
HMM
-THE FOLLOWING DAY


...PRETTY MUCH THE POLAR OPPOSITE OF ME
My boyfriend is smart, successful, and really fancy
Hi Mr Ta-Ke
So you have a girlfriend too, huh?
I'm kinda glad
I wonder what she's like?
She must be really cute
YEP


OUR DEPOSITORS ARE JUST WORRIED ABOUT THE RISK SURROUNDING THE PAYOFF... YOU KNOW—
BLAH BLAH
YOU'RE SO WONDERFUL
HIROSHI'S IMAGI-NATION
HMM


IN SOME SENSE, AN IRRESPONSIBLE RELATIONSHIP LIKE THIS ACTUALLY BRINGS OUT A PERSON'S MODESTY.
TWO ANONY-MOUS PEOPLE WHO HAVE NEVER MET...
I totally get where you're coming from. I've had the same experience and
CLAT CLAT
CLAT CLAT
YEAH—I TOTALLY KNOW HOW THAT FEELS
I'm trying really hard to keep up with him, but... It's just really tiring sometimes

FOR SOME REASON I HAVE NO PROBLEM TALKING ABOUT THEM WITH MISS SATSUKI
EVEN THE THINGS I CAN'T TALK ABOUT WITH MISS HARUKA

WE'VE ONLY KNOWN EACH OTHER FOR A FEW WEEKS NOW, BUT WE'RE SO CLOSE IT FEELS LIKE WE'VE BEEN FRIENDS FOR YEARS.
"MISS SATSUKI" BECAME "SATSUKI," AND "MR. TA-KE" BECAME "TA-KE"
HEY
NEW MESSAGE
AS WE CONTINUED TO EXCHANGE EMAILS,

SO LIKE ACCORDING TO MY FRIEND
HER FRIEND'S FRIEND IS ALSO DOING.

I SHOULD BE GETTING AN EMAIL FROM SATSUKI SOON.
...HEY...

I'M SORRY.
HUH? OH!
ARE YOU LISTENING, HIKISHI?

I WAS HOOKED.

I'VE JUST BEEN A LITTLE TIRED FROM WORK LATELY..

I JUST COULDN'T WAIT TO TURN ON MY COMPUTER.

NEW MESSAGE

HEY—

I FELT LIKE A DRUG ADDICT SUFFERING FROM WITHDRAWAL.

I MEAN WE'RE EACH IN A RELATIONSHIP ALREADY AND OUR RELATIONSHIP IS JUST..

BUT OUR RELATIONSHIP NEVER WENT BEYOND THE INTERNET

BOOP BOOP BOO—P

A LOT OF THE TIME WE WOULD COMPLETELY FORGET ABOUT THE TIME AND TALK TO EACH OTHER TILL DAYBREAK.

ANYWAYS I LOVED TALKING TO SATSUKI.

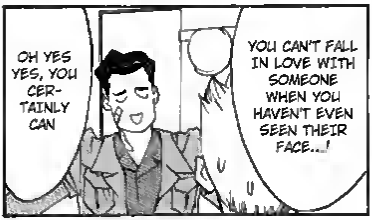
EMAIL STOPPED BEING ENOUGH SO WE'RE NOW TALKING TO EACH OTHER THROUGH IM*.

*IM (INSTANT MESSAGING): A SERVICE THAT ALLOWS REAL-TIME COMMUNICATION AMONG SPECIFIC USERS OVER THE INTERNET

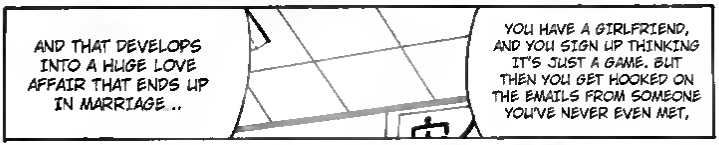
WHAT IS OUR RELATIONSHIP, ANYWAYS?

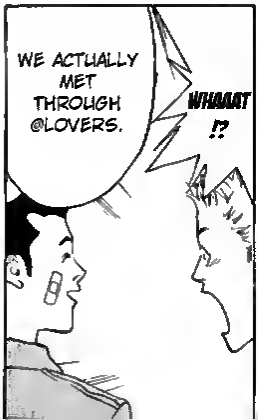
OUR RELATIONSHIP

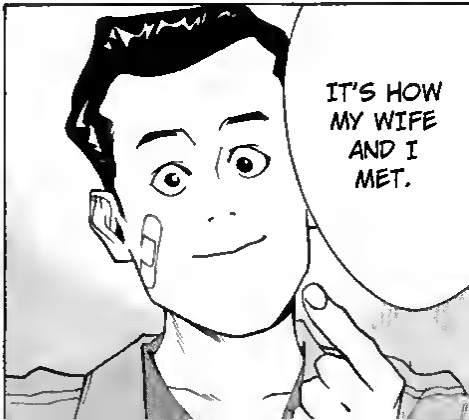
YOU'VE FALLEN FOR THAT SATSUKI GIRL, HAVEN'T YOU.
YOU'VE FALLEN FOR HER.

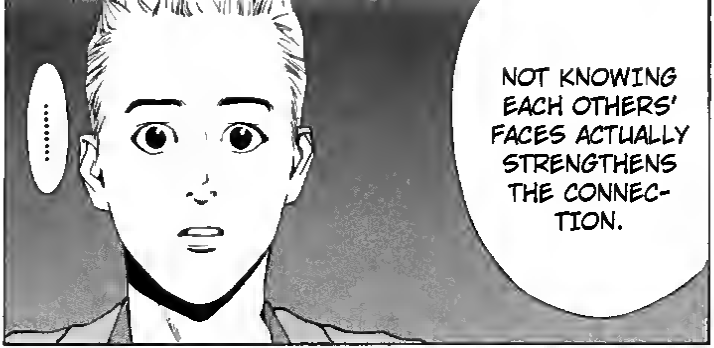

OH YES YES, YOU CER-TAINLY CAN
YOU CAN'T FALL IN LOVE WITH SOMEONE WHEN YOU HAVEN'T EVEN SEEN THEIR FACE..!

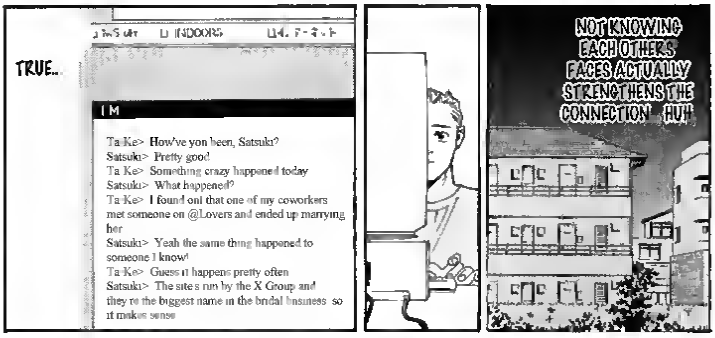
I'M ALREADY WITH MISS HARUKA!
AND BES-IDES
N-NO WAY!!


AND THAT DEVELOPS INTO A HUGE LOVE AFFAIR THAT ENDS UP IN MARRIAGE ..
YOU HAVE A GIRLFRIEND, AND YOU SIGN UP THINKING IT'S JUST A GAME. BUT THEN YOU GET HOOKED ON THE EMAILS FROM SOMEONE YOU'VE NEVER EVEN MET.


WE ACTUALLY MET THROUGH @LOVERS.
WHAAAT !?

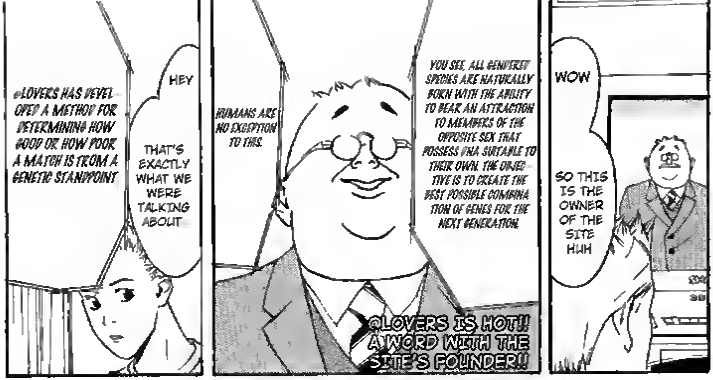

IT'S HOW MY WIFE AND I MET.

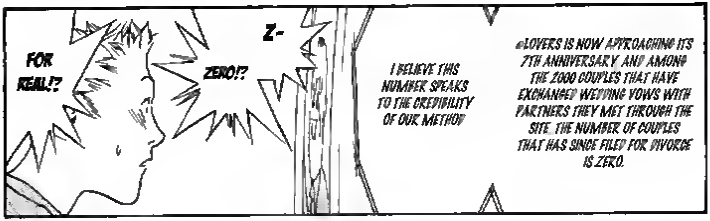


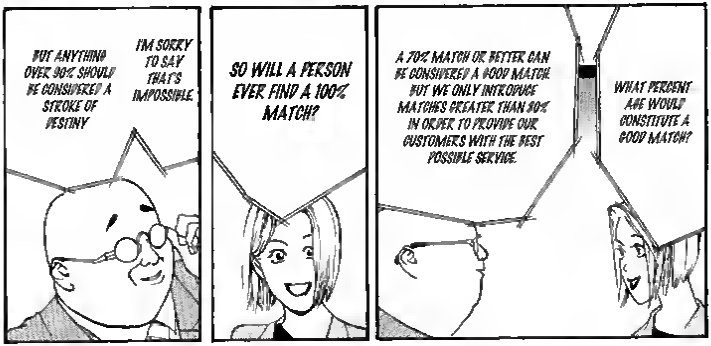

TRUE..
IM
Ta-Ke> How've yon been, Satsuki?
Satsuki> Pretty good!
Ta-Ke> Something crazy happened today
Satsuki> What happened?
Ta-Ke> I found onl that one of my coworkers met someone on @Lovers and ended up marrying her
Satsuki> Yeah the same thing happened to someone I know!
Ta-Ke> Guess it happens pretty often
Satsuki> The site s run by the X Group and they re the biggest name in the bridal business so it makes sense
NOT KNOWING EACH OTHERS FACES ACTUALLY STRENGTHENS THE CONNECTION HUH

tsuki> Hey are you watching TV right now?
ke> Nope
tsuki> Speak of the devil, the director of X Group is talking about @Lovers on TV

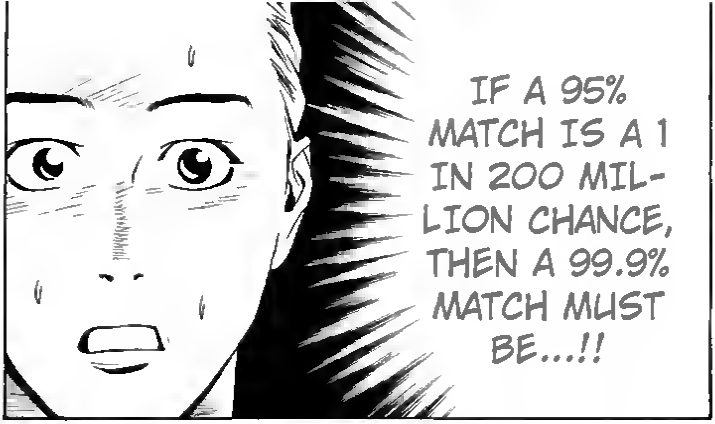
tsuki> Hey are you watching TV right now?


@LOVERS HAS DEVELOPED A METHOD FOR DETERMINING HOW GOOD OR HOW POOR A MATCH IS FROM A GENETIC STANDPOINT
HEY
THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT WE WERE TALKING ABOUT
HUMANS ARE NO EXCEPTION TO THIS.
YOU SEE, ALL GENDERED SPECIES ARE NATURALLY BORN WITH THE ABILITY TO BEAR AN ATTRACTION TO MEMBERS OF THE OPPOSITE SEX THAT POSSESS DNA SUITABLE TO THEIR OWN. THE OBJECTIVE IS TO CREATE THE BEST POSSIBLE COMBINATION OF GENES FOR THE NEXT GENERATION.
@LOVERS IS HOT!! A WORD WITH THE SITE'S FOUNDER!!
WOW
SO THIS IS THE OWNER OF THE SITE HUH


FOR REAL!?
Z-
ZERO!?
I BELIEVE THIS NUMBER SPEAKS TO THE CREDIBILITY OF OUR METHOD
@LOVERS IS NOW APPROACHING ITS 7TH ANNIVERSARY AND AMONG THE 2000 COUPLES THAT HAVE EXCHANGED WEDDING VOWS WITH PARTNERS THEY MET THROUGH THE SITE. THE NUMBER OF COUPLES THAT HAS SINCE FILED FOR DIVORCE IS ZERO.


BUT ANYTHING OVER 90% SHOULD BE CONSIDERED A STROKE OF DESTINY
I'M SORRY TO SAY THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE.
SO WILL A PERSON EVER FIND A 100% MATCH?
A 70% MATCH OR BETTER CAN BE CONSIDERED A GOOD MATCH. BUT WE ONLY INTRODUCE MATCHES GREATER THAN 90% IN ORDER TO PROVIDE OUR CUSTOMERS WITH THE BEST POSSIBLE SERVICE.
WHAT PERCENT ARE WOULD CONSTITUTE A GOOD MATCH?

!!
AFTER ALL, THE LIKELIHOOD OF DISCOVERING A 95% MATCH IS 1 IN 200 MILLION. AND THAT'S ONLY IN THEORY.



Satsuki> You saw that just now?
Ta-Ke> Yeah
CLAT CLAT

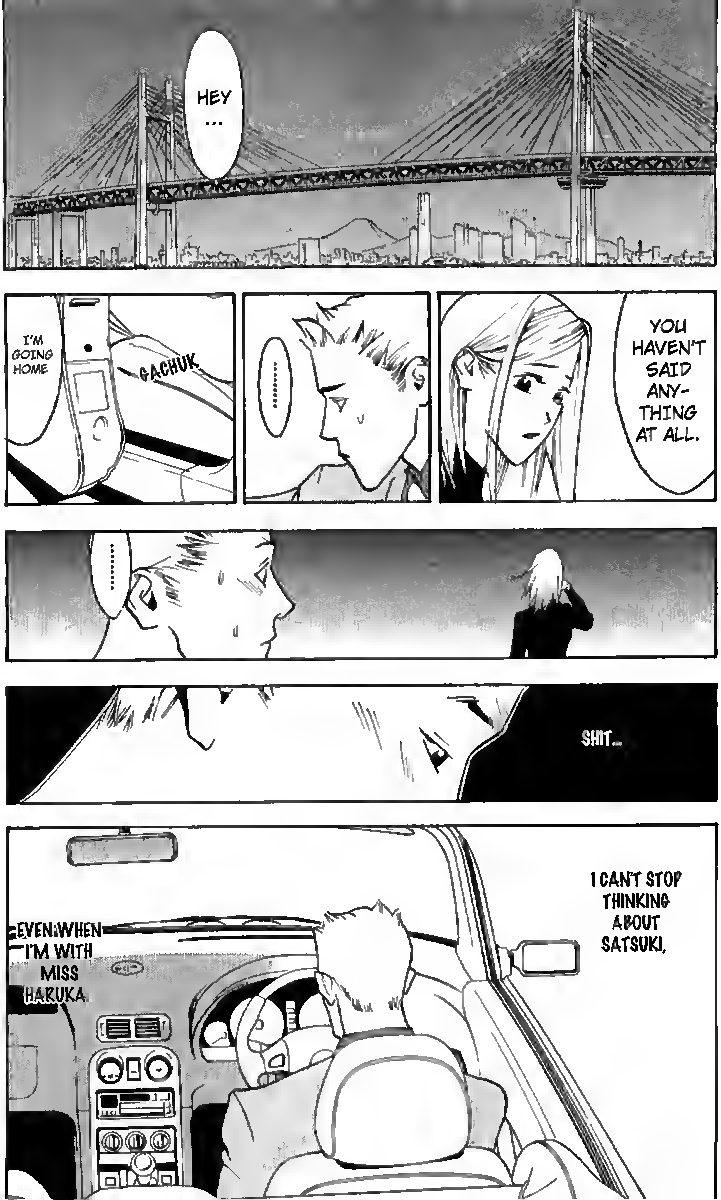
BOOP
Satsuki> You saw that just now?

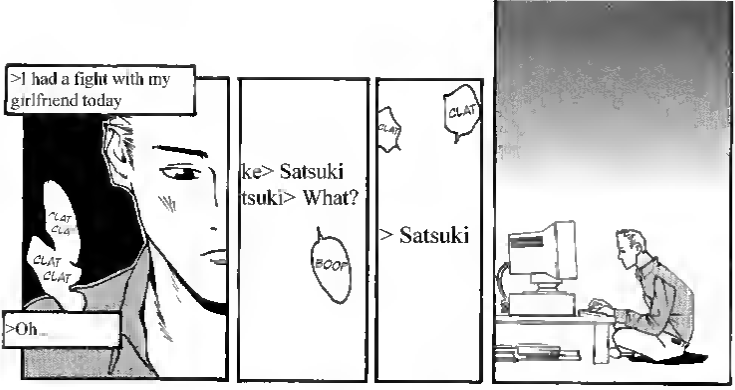
BOOP
Satsuki> Do you think we're destined to be together?

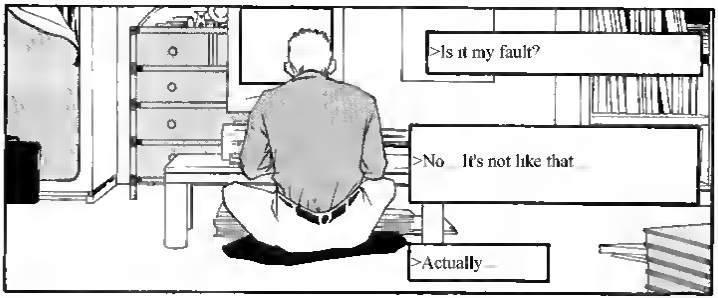
I CAN'T COMPREHEND MY OWN FEELINGS.

WASN'T MY DNA SEEKING TO BE WITH MISS HARUKA?

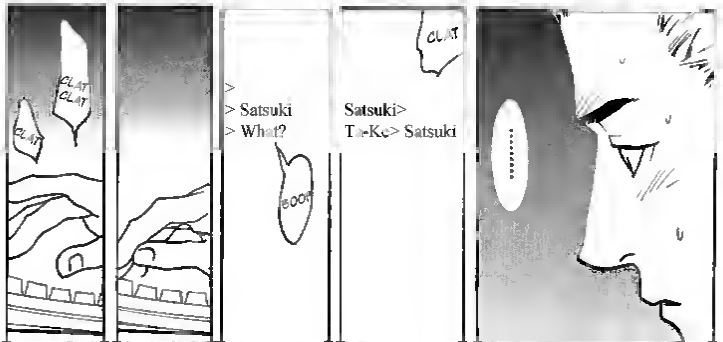
DESTINY... WASN'T I DESTINED TO BE WITH MISS HARUKA?


HEY ...
I'M GOING HOME
GACHUK
.....
YOU HAVEN'T SAID ANY-THING AT ALL.
.....
SHIT...
I CAN'T STOP THINKING ABOUT SATSUKI,
EVEN WHEN I'M WITH MISS HARUKA

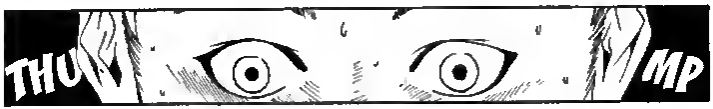


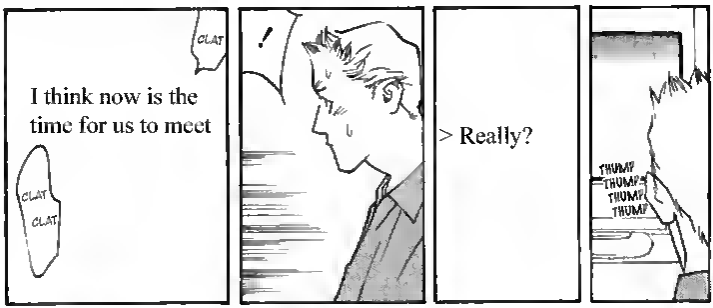


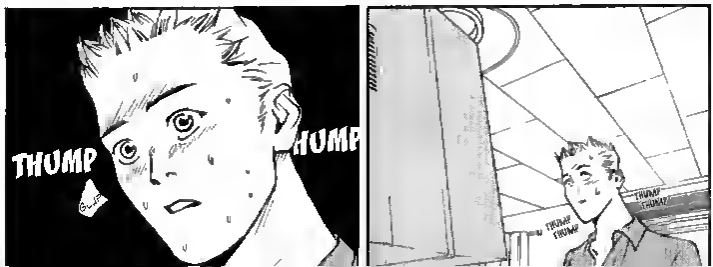
Satsuki> I've also been having problems with my boyfriend recently



Ta-Ke> Wanna meet up sometime?

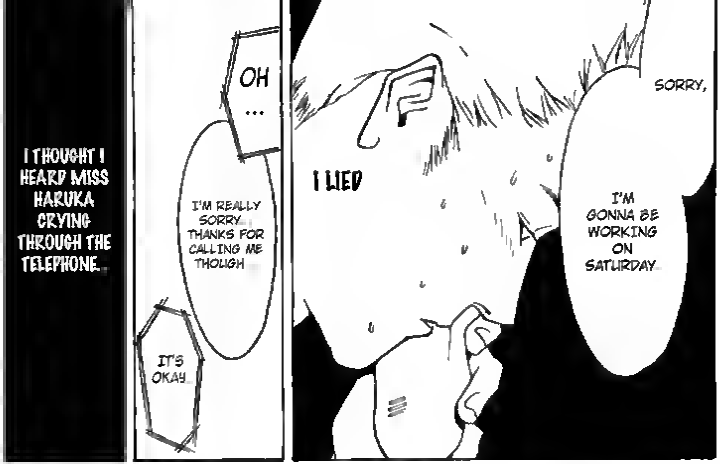


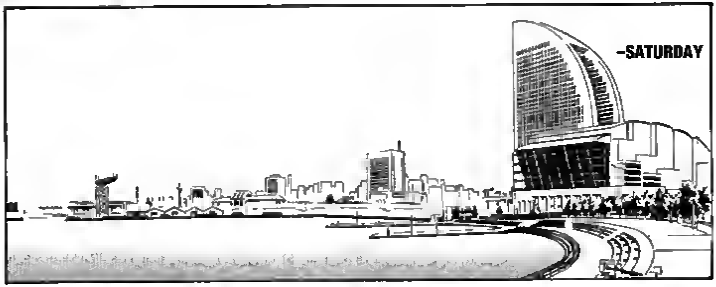




Satsuki> OK

I'M FINALLY ABOUT TO CROSS THE LINE I NEVER THOUGHT I WOULD CROSS.
FINALLY...
FINALLY...
NAH, DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.
SORRY ABOUT LAST TIME STORMING OFF LIKE THAT...
HEY...
HIKISHI? IT'S ME, HARUKA
HELLO?
OHH
WE AGREED TO MEET AT MINATO MIRAI IN YOKOHAMA ON SATURDAY... THREE DAYS FROM NOW
OH... UHM
I'M MEETING WITH SATSUKI ON SATURDAY...!
ARE YOU FREE... THIS COMING SATURDAY?
!!

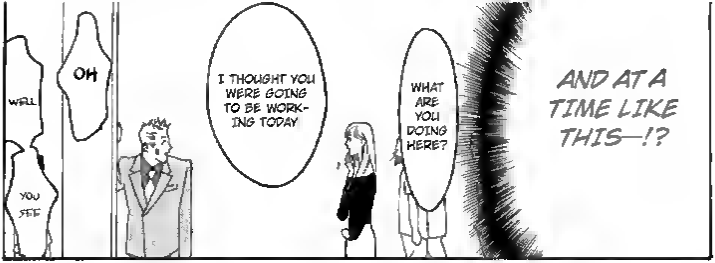

I THOUGHT I HEARD MISS HARUKA CRYING THROUGH THE TELEPHONE...
OH ...
I'M REALLY SORRY... THANKS FOR CALLING ME THOUGH...
IT'S OKAY...
I LIED
SORRY,
I'M GONNA BE WORKING ON SATURDAY...


-SATURDAY

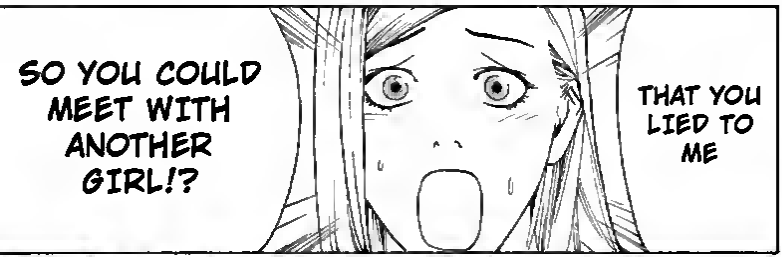
.....
MY HEART HAS BEEN HEAVY THESE PAST THREE DAYS...
7 MORE MINUTES UNTIL THE TIME WE AGREED TO...
SINCE WE WOULD BE MEETING EACH OTHER FOR THE FIRST TIME, WE DECIDED TO CARRY SOMETHING THAT WOULD MAKE US STAND OUT. I WOULD BE HOLDING A BOUQUET OF ROSES, AND SHE WOULD BE HOLDING A WHITE PURSE. THAT WAS THE PLAN.

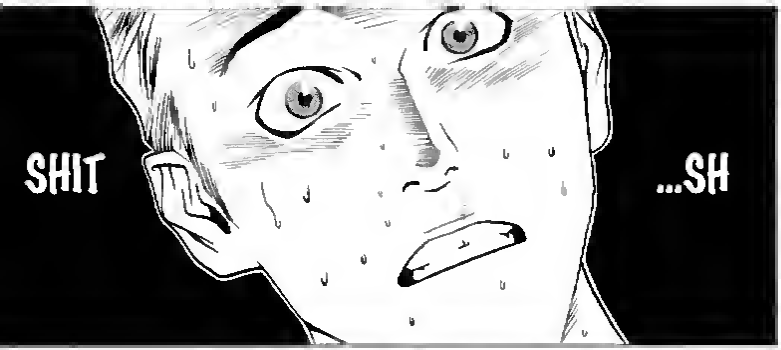
MISS HARUKA
MY HEART WAS SUFFERING FROM THE GUILTY FEELING THAT I WAS BETRAYING MISS HARUKA.
.....
JUST 5 MORE MINUTES,
AND SATSUKI IS GONNA BE HERE-
TODAY IS THE DAY I MEET SATSUKI.
I'M ALWAYS THINKING ABOUT SATSUKI WHEN I'M WITH MISS HARUKA,
BUT I CAN'T STOP THINKING ABOUT MISS HARUKA TODAY!
MAN, I'M SUCH A BASTARD!!
!!
WOOP
WHAP
WOOP
DASH

AWAY FROM THE MEETING SPOT!!
I RAN LIKE I WAS FLEEING FROM THOSE FEELINGS OF INSECURITY
I RAN.
PANT PANT
PANT PANT PANT
I DID THE RIGHT THING...
IT'S ALRIGHT...
MISS HARUKA !!
HIKI-SHI?
HUH ..?
WHY... WHY...?

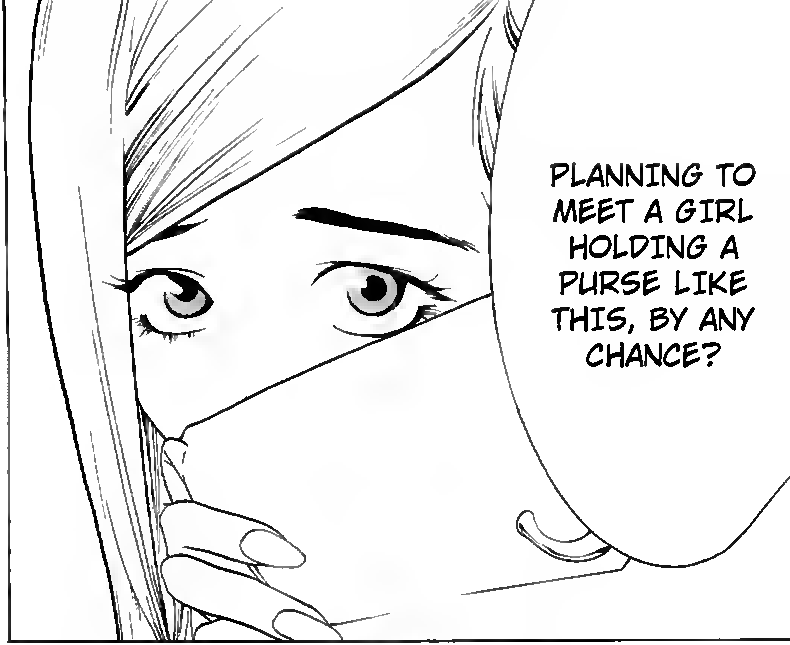

AND AT A TIME LIKE THIS—!?
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
I THOUGHT YOU WERE GOING TO BE WORK-ING TODAY
OH
WELL
YOU SEE

COULD IT BE
!
THIS IS JUST...
OH... WELL—
!!
WHAT'S WITH THE FLOWERS?
?


SO YOU COULD MEET WITH ANOTHER GIRL!?
THAT YOU LIED TO ME

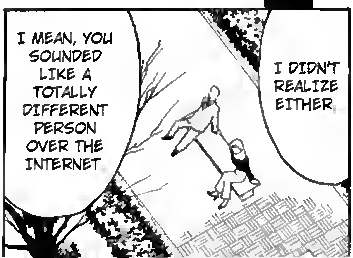

SHIT
...SH

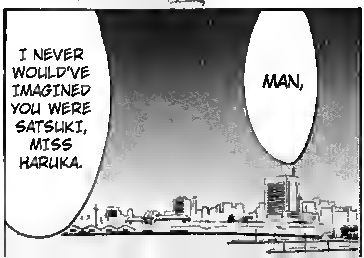
WERE YOU...
I SEE HOW IT IS...
I SEE
DOOO M


PLANNING TO MEET A GIRL HOLDING A PURSE LIKE THIS, BY ANY CHANCE?

HUH?
.....

HUH!?
SATSUKI IS
WHICH MEANS

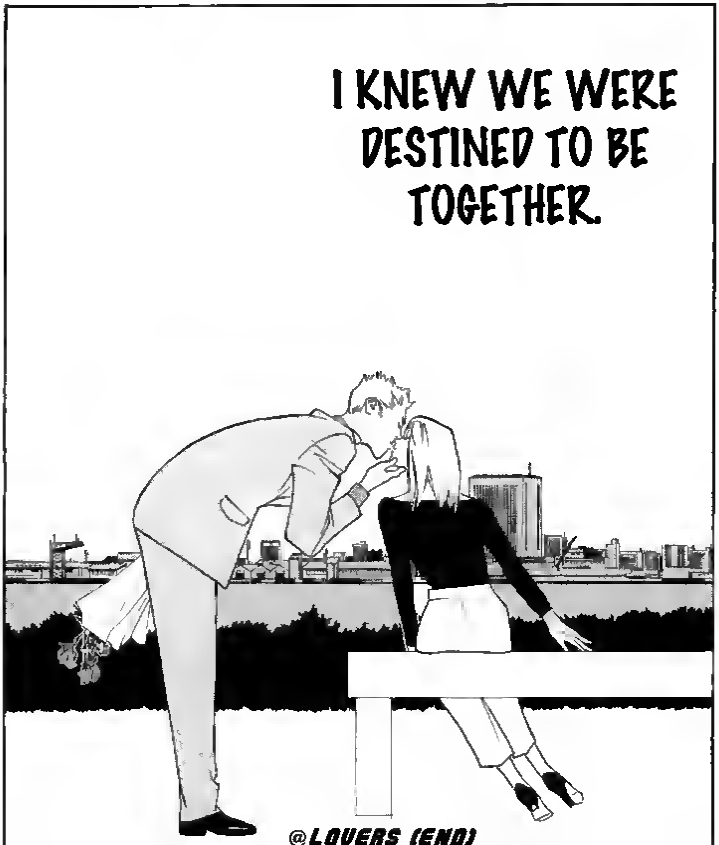

I MEAN, YOU SOUNDED LIKE A TOTALLY DIFFERENT PERSON OVER THE INTERNET
I DIDN'T REALIZE EITHER


I NEVER WOULD'VE IMAGINED YOU WERE SATSUKI, MISS HARUKA.
MAN,

MODERN PAPER FACTORIES USE COMPUTERS TOO, ALRIGHT!!
YOU LIED TO ME TOO! YOU TOLD ME YOU WORK WITH COMPUTERS!
I NEVER SAID "DAUGHTER OF A CORPORATE CEO." ...BESIDES,
YOU TOLD ME YOU WERE THE DAUGHTER OF A CORPORATE CEO!
YOU SECRETLY AGREED TO MEET WITH SOMEONE ELSE EVEN THOUGH YOU'RE GOING OUT WITH ME!
ANYWAYS, YOU WERE CLEARLY TRYING TO CHEAT ON ME!
THE OWNER OF A SMALL-TOWN FACTORY IS TECHNICALLY A CEO.
I...
YOU AGREED TO MEET UP TOO!!
SAME TO YOU!!
...I REALLY STARTED TO REGRET SAYING OK...
I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT

I ENDED UP RUNNING AWAY ANY-WAYS.
SAME HERE. I STARTED FEEL-ING REALLY GUILTY ONCE I WAS ACTUALLY ABOUT TO MEET SATSUKI...
I WAS GOING TO TURN DOWN TA-KE IF YOU PROMISED TO MEET ME.
SO I CALLED YOU AND ASKED IF WE COULD MEET ON SATURDAY
PFFT
PFFT ...
HAH-HAH-HAH-HAH
HAH-HAH-HAH-HAH
YEAH
IRONIC, HUH. WE COULD ONLY BE OUR TRUE SELVES WHEN WE WERE ON THE INTERNET.
WE WERE SO AFRAID OF SHOWING EACH OTHER WHO WE REALLY ARE, DON'T YOU THINK?
WE'VE NEVER ARGUED LIKE THIS BEFORE
YEAH

I'M GONNA TELL YOU RIGHT HERE, RIGHT NOW!
NO
I'M GONNA SAY IT!
!
HAH-HAH... DON'T PUSH YOURSELF. JUST TELL SATSUKI IF IT'S TOO HARD.
YOU SEE
I... UMM
SWUP
?
MISS HARUKA


I KNEW WE WERE DESTINED TO BE TOGETHER.
@LOVERS (END)

初出一覧

LIAR GAME roots of A――「週刊ヤングジャンプ」2008年9号掲載
ナインダーツ――「週刊ヤングジャンプ増刊　漫革」2001年9/20号掲載
サンソウ～禁断の占術～❶――「週刊ヤングジャンプ増刊　漫革」2002年6/5号掲載
サンソウ～禁断の占術～❷――「週刊ヤングジャンプ増刊　漫革」2002年9/25号掲載
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